

# In the Market Place

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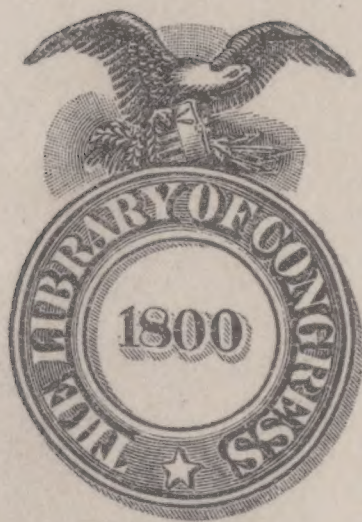


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JANE VALENTINE





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# IN THE MARKET PLACE



*Nellie J. Meeker*

BY

JANE VALENTINE

AUTHOR OF "BEVERLY OSGOOD OR WHEN THE GREAT  
CITY IS AWAKE," "JONAS BRAND," ETC., ETC.

The woman stood every night in the shadow of the  
great window, and peered into the face of every man  
who came and went in The Market Place.

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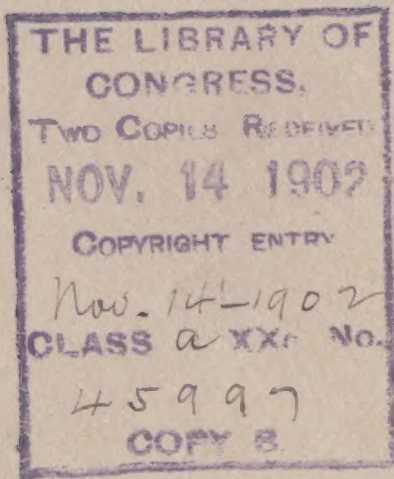
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TO  
**the honorable Mrs. Mary F. Henderson,**

WHOSE HUSBAND WAS FORMERLY  
UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM MISSOURI,  
NOW OF WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
ONE OF THE MOST EMINENT AND CULTURED  
AMERICAN WOMEN,  
YET WITHAL SO GRACIOUS AND KINDLY,  
A LOVER AND PATRON OF ART AND LITERATURE.  
THE AUTHOR  
HUMBLY DEDICATES THIS BOOK.







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# IN THE MARKET PLACE.

## CHAPTER I.

### WATCHING IN THE MARKET PLACE.

THE long, balmy, May day, had faded into the mellow lingering twilight of the spring evening, and now hung its mantle of gossamer shadows about the brick and stone buildings that rose upon all sides of the old Market Place, softening their harsh outlines, their dingy, grimy facades, that the rain and snow, the soot and smoke, of many winters had deepened into a slate gray. The Market Place stood to the north, down in the business heart of the old City of St. L. It fronted on Fifth and Sixth Streets. Fifth St. now called Broadway, one of the most fashionable thoroughfares of St. L., where all the large wholesale and retail dry goods houses rear their stately heights up into the violet tinted, misty atmosphere.

The shadows had crept and crept, until the electric lights flashed out over the streets, with their hustle and traffic. Over the heads of the people; over men and women hurrying to and fro; hither and thither, on their different ways. Over stalls filled with flowers sending out their perfume to greet the passers by.



Stalls loaded with all the rich, ripe fruits of spring and the early summer, that blended their varied colors, and took on all kinds of hues under the blue white flame of the lamps. There were young women with white aprons and saucy little white caps pinned on thick coils of brown hair, handing dishes of luscious strawberries to customers, their deep red mingling with the creamy ices. Also young men as picturesque as the girls, drawing cool foamy drinks from soda fountains. Booths where French *Café au lait* was served, and a lunch, of anything in the delicate line. Booths of fresh yellow butter, kept by two women, their faces grown saffron and wrinkled from long years standing in the Market Place, still had something of the Betty Higdon type, in a certain kindly expression, blending with their hard shrewdness. There were large stalls of all kinds of fish, vegetables, meat and game.

As the evening advanced the people became more numerous, men and women of all nations and climes, of every age, type, shade and condition in life, which go to make up the great masses. Young mechanics with their sweethearts out for a jaunt, to wind up with a lunch in some of the many booths. Also actors, actresses and singers in the *Cafés* and summer gardens pass and repass. Dancers, courtesans who pretend to be working girls, saloonkeepers, gamblers, sporting men and women, thieves, pickpockets; all to be met within this motly throng, as they go and come on this lovely May evening.

But there was one who mixed not in the throng,



as one who is a looker on, can see and observe more in a crowd, than those who mingle with it. This person was a woman; she had stationed herself on Broadway, on the northwest corner of the Market Place, in the shadow of the large window of the big drygoods house, of F. N. & Co., where she could see distinctly the face of every man and woman, who passed by, and could not be observed by them. She was about thirty-four or five years of age, tall and slender, the willowy slender which seldom carries much flesh even in mature years. She wore a black silk dress, rich in material and make, although showing signs of wear. In the style of the bodice that fitted perfectly every curve of her slight, graceful figure, the elegant sleeve, and in the hang of the skirt, told that some artist hand must have fashioned it. About her shoulders, and gathered up around her slender throat, was a black thread lace scarf, and upon her head which was regal in its poise, she wore a piece of black lace twisted into the shape of a little bonnet. And over the bonnet was worn a long tissue veil, of some dark color. Her lustrous brown black hair, rippled on a low, wide forehead, and under the delicate brows, great violet eyes glowed like caverns, with fire flaming up from their depths. Her face was pale, and seamed by illness and suffering, yet it had lines of great beauty; and her whole bearing had a queenliness and an air of distinction, which marked her as high bred, and belonging to the upper class.

Every now and then, she would draw the long tissue veil closer about her features, and fall back into the



shadow of the window, as some man drew near, whose face, she thought, bore a likeness to the one she was in search of. She had stood thus from the gathering of dusk, until after ten o'clock, when the crowd had thinned considerably and the keepers of the stands and stalls, had hung their shutters and put out their lights, and there was nothing open but a few booths, and the saloons, and restaurants, that clustered on the side streets of the Market Place. As she stepped a few paces out from the window, she heaved a deep sigh, and gazed about her hesitatingly. She had just made a turn to leave, when Cyrus Alvin on his way home from the Mission Hall on Ave. F. three or four blocks away, passed the window. As he did so the full glare of the electric light fell upon him. A hectic flush mounted to the woman's cheek, and she quickly stepped back in her hiding place, with the exclamation: "Dear God! what a face! A face that does one good to look upon now and then." Out of all the faces that came and went, while she stood waiting and watching, faces lined and seamed with every passion that cramp and fetter men's souls; strife, greed, avarice, deceit, hate, sensuality, and the philosophy, "Let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die," this face out of them all, rose up in its beauty of intellect purity, tenderness, and love for one's own kind.

On the evenings that Cyrus Alvin preached in the Mission he generally walked through the Market Place on his way home. He was one of the few men in the world, and every century is marked with but a



few, who spring up here and there out of the millions of men, who have at heart, love for the people, and sympathy for the masses ; who understand their weaknesses, ignorance, failures and their toil and struggle for existence. Cyrus loved the Market Place, and his loving, Christian heart, went out to the crowds that came and went there daily and nightly. If he could but turn it into a Forum such as the Greeks had at Athens, he thought, one that would hold thousands of people. Why not a Christian Forum, where he could catch the ear of the motley crowds that thronged it from four in the morning, until the stroke of midnight, in search of the fleeting pleasures of the moment, and preach Christ's beautiful and simple teachings, and turn the tide of their lives to better purposes. Cyrus Alvin passed on, the woman's eyes followed him, as if she divined something soothing, something in him, that would act as a healing balm to still the tempest that tossed and raged in her bosom. She watched him until he turned the corner of the street and became lost to sight. The woman drew her veil more closely about her face, stepped out from her hiding place, and went her way.



## CHAPTER II.

ALL HER PAST WITH ITS LOVES AND HATE, ITS  
SINS AND REMORSE.

SHE turned south on Broadway, and walked about a block, when she came to Ave F., where she turned up and walked until she reached Eighth St., then went south another block, which brought her to W. St., where she turned down and walked until she came to the middle of a long row of small, two story, old brick tenement houses, black with the soot and grime of years. In about the center of this row, she went into a narrow alley, which led to the rear; here she began to ascend a stairway, old and rickety, that led up to a porch as old and rickety as the stair-way. It was almost totally dark here, but for the faint rays of a candle, which seemed to come from a window looking out on the porch above. As the woman climbed slowly up the steps, she was watched by an elderly negress who stood at the head of the stairs. When she nearly reached the top she held out her long, slender, white hand, to the black one, that was extended to help her, and the colored woman exclaimed as she did so: "Oh, honey Mistiss, I'se jes' a gwyman to go hunt fo' ye." The black woman led her mistress across the porch and into the door of the room, where the candle burned in the window.



"I had no idea it was so late, Lou," said the woman. Taking off her veil, she untied the strings of her little bonnet, wrapped the veil about it, and threw them on a cot that stood in one corner of the room and seated herself on the cot beside them with a sigh of exhaustion.

"Da's no use ye pestern yesef in dis way, my Miss Annette. Ye jes' let tings go, honey, de Lod will fouch Massa Count in His own good time suah, honey. Is ye suah Mistiss dat he lef Pais an came back to his own lan'."

"Oh, yes, Lou, he must have reached here in November. You know his father died the July before, disinheriting him, and he came to this country to contest the will, as he had spent the large sums of money his father gave him, on condition that he would live abroad. He is in hiding somewhere, Lou. He has no money only what he would make by cards, games of chance, and his wits. Yes, he is hiding from me, Lou, as he showed plainly by his actions for months, before he left Paris, he wanted to sever all ties with me. You remember I did not see him for six or seven weeks before he left, nor had he for several months before that contributed one sou, to keep up our expensive mode of living." She sighed and laid her head on the hard moss pillow of the cot, made by her old nurse Louise.

The black woman lighted a small coal oil stove that stood on a sort of improvised table, made of two or three old rough boards,—and nailed to some split sticks of sawed cord-wood for legs. She then placed



over the stove a small, tin sauce-pan full of water to boil. In a corner near where the table stood, were a few shelves of the same rough boards, covered with clean newspapers, and arranged upon them were two, or three plates, two vegetable dishes, a white china cup and saucer, and a blue delf cup and saucer of larger dimensions. In the opposite corner from where Annette Lefarge reclined, was a similar cot, but made something like the table, of rough boards. It was covered with a patch-work quilt, old and worn but scrupulously clean, so was the calico case that covered the small pillow. This was Louise's bed, made by her own hands, as was all the furniture in the room. The walls of the room were bare of paper, the plastering dingy and grimy, the floor was also bare, but clean, the boards scrubbed white.

Louise had been Annette Lefarge's mother's slave, and Annette's nurse from the moment her eyes first opened to the light of this mundane sphere. She was about fifty-five years of age, her skin was a dark copper color, her face intelligent and pleasing; the features were shapely and expressed much character. A red bandanna handkerchief turbaned her head, and her blue calico dress, and long gingham apron, looked as if they had just come from the iron, they were so spotlessly clean, and were without a wrinkle. And after years of wealth and luxury, which she shared with her Mistress, she was now her only support, and had been from the day they arrived in the City, where thirteen years before Annette had flown from home, husband and child. And now at the age of thirty-



four, she was in the first stages of that dread disease consumption.

Aunt Louise took from one of the shelves a small, tin tea-pot, poured in some boiling water, rinsed it out, took from a paper package a teaspoonfull and a half of tea, put it in her little pot, and poured over it enough boiling water to steep. She then spread a few clean newspapers over the rough boards of the table, placed upon it the white china cup and saucer, a plate, a small dish of strawberries, that the dear old soul, had bought at one of the fruit stands in the Market Place, on her way home from work, where she had washed all day for a family. This faithful creature was an exception to her race. Her hardest work in all her former life was to nurse her old Mistress' children, and to attend to her dear Miss Annette. She took from its paper wrapping a patten of nice fresh butter, also some fresh rolls bought at the bakery. She then drew up the table to the side of the cot, where her mistress reclined, although it looked decidedly shaky, still it was strong, for her own hands had nailed the boards to the cord-wood legs. Then she poured the rest of the boiling water into the tea-pot.

"Come, honey mistiss," she said, as she poured out the tea, into the white china cup, "ye's hadn't fixed a ting to eat fo' ye sef all de day. Can't spec to las long dat way, an ye's so poolly."

Annette Lefarge was a lover of a good cup of tea, and had taught her maid years before how to make it, as the blacks are not tea lovers, and seldom master



the art of brewing the delicious beverage, their liking running to coffee. But Louise had not only attained perfection in tea making, but learned to love it as well as her mistress. When she had finished waiting on Annette, she took from the shelf her own blue delf cup and saucer, put in a little cream and sugar and poured the cup full of tea; buttered a roll and seated herself on her cot. It was the first mouthful she had tasted since a light lunch at noon.

“Have you ever thought of going to the Institute, Louise, since our arrival here,” asked Annette, heaving a great sigh, and taking a sip or two of tea.

“Mistiss honey, da is no use ye’s bovern about de chile now dea,” she replied in the softest tones, as she observed tears in her Mistress’ eyes. “What could ye do now, honey, fo de chile? Ye’d only fotch him to misery, an if anyting hoppens to ye, honey, he might fall into bad hans. Ise so ole now, dea, an we’s so poo-a, Ise couldn’t take da sponsibility ob rearin’ him, an’ he ought to be reared a geneman; all his kin befo him hab been ladies an genemen. Ye’s all de chile Ise ken kyare fo now, an its moighty poo-a at dat. So, honey, dea, done trouble about de chile, tries to be jes as comfotable as ye ’s ken, an if de Lod is willin fo ye to seed him, ye’ll get stronger an seed de boy, dats de trufe, honey, suah. I knows, honey,” she continued, her cheek blanching gray, “dat Ise not widout blame mysef, but dea, ye’s would go, an no advisin’ of mine could keep ye fom it. An so long as ye wus sot on gwyman an begged me so had to go wid ye, Ise couldn’t bear to seed ole Mistisses



daughter go to foeign pa-ts alone, wid a strange man, so Ise gib up my little home, Ise kept since ole Pete, my husban', died, an' went wid ye. But tell me, honey, wus da no divoce, dat what white folks git in de Coutts, an a ceramony afta. Ise always thought da wus."

"I led to you believe so at the time, but we had to keep our whereabouts a secret. The Count thought, and I thought, that my husband would follow us until he tired of the chase, then he would sue for a divorce, but he did not until we had been gone eight years. When I found I was going to become a mother, I urged the Count to pay a visit to this country; he had been talking of taking the journey for some time. He wanted to see his father about money matters; when we arrived here he acknowledged to me that my husband had applied and gotten a divorce two years before. You know, Lou, I never wanted to part with my baby. I made a vow after vow to myself, before my baby boy came, that I would give up the old, gay, frivlous life, and devote myself to it the remainder of my days. You and you only know, Lou, how I pleaded with him, to let me keep it, I thought it would be a tie between us, something by which I could hold him. I had grown sick of his profligate way of living, not that I had much of the old ardent passion, I once felt for him left, it had mostly worn itself out, or rather had been crushed out, by him.

"Time and again the thought came to me after we arrived in America, that he intended leaving me. I



begged him while here in this country, before my baby was born, to let us be legally married. He made a great many excuses, but finally promised me if he could make some arrangement with his father, to provide him, with a settled yearly income, we would go back to Paris, and be married there, which would be the safest, as the French laws in regard to the legality of marriage are different from ours, and when we were settled in Paris, we would send you for the child. I never learned from him the result of his visit to his father, but I don't think he succeeded in getting a settled income nor any money, but you know we left the baby here and returned to France. There he deserted me, I suppose he planned that after the little money he left us was gone and there was no more to keep up our handsome and expensive apartments, I would not sell my laces, furs and jewels, but find relief and comfort for my wounded feelings, for all the years of my youth that we spent together, under the protection of the Marquise de Noailles. He was very rich, and always had a strange infatuation for me. He was married, and you know, dear Louise, that the American woman can't play the role of mistress to a married man, so well as her foreign sister, the French woman. We are bad enough, and I don't know but worse. We get divorces, which relieves the husband of all further responsibility of the support and care of wife and children; if it is the wife, of course she will stick to her children. I had fallen low enough, I had sinned grievously, but I made up my mind that the woman who for nearly thirteen



years passed as the Count de Gascon's wife, the Countess de Gascon, should never be another man's mistress.

"As you are aware I sold all my wardrobe, silks, satins, laces, furs and jewels. A good deal of the money went to keep up our house for the months we waited for the Count to return, and what brought us here to search for him. And I will find him, Lou, you will help to find him. We will search the whole City, we will hunt the whole earth over for him, and when found,"—she rose up from the cot, her lace scarf dropped from her shoulders, her tall attenuated figure had lost none of its sinuous grace, her head rose proudly up from the long slender throat, that looked like a piece of polished ivory against the black coils of her lustrous hair. All her past with its love and hate, its errors and sins, its remorse, and now its tragic ending, leaped up from her heart, and flashed out in white flame from the great, hollow eyes, which looked like deep, dark caverns. "Yes, and when found this hand," she lifted it slowly up, "will kill him, will plunge this," she held a long, silver mounted stiletto in it, "plunge this into his heart. Ah, my old name, my father's name, what would he have thought of daughter who did as I did. Is it nothing for a woman, to throw away husband, home and child, good name, place, honor, and chastity, for a man? Yes Lou, this frail hand, that has never hurt a fly will drive the knife to the quick, and I will stand and see him fall dead at my feet. But—but—my baby boy. Oh, God be merciful to me." She bent her head, and



covered her face with her hands, and dropped on the cot. "Ah, yes, the God above, to whom I have never given one thought in all my careless, pleasure-loving, sinful life take pity,—pity on me, pity a wretched woman like me."

So here on this fair May evening, in this poor little room, in the poverty stricken tenement quarter of the City, with its bare floor, sits Annette Lefarge, a pale, worn woman, still young, still beautiful, but now fallen a victim to the dread disease, consumption. She who for thirteen years, was known in the principal cities of Europe, as the beautiful American, the Countess de Gascon. The woman whose beauty, wit and grace, attracted scores of what is called the best men, of the upper world. English Lords, Earls, Dukes, French Counts and Viscounts, Marquises, rich men, men of letters, artists, and journalists, all gathered about her.

"Mon Dieu, the American is beyond compare," said the Marquis de Noailles, one of the richest, handsomest nobles of the French Capital, a savant, a member of the Academic, but whose weakness was beautiful women. It was at a Fête, given at a bijou house on the Champs Elysees, that the Count de Gascon had rented for a number of years. Annette known then as the Countess de Gascon, was standing in the middle of a long Salon, in the centre of a group of noted men and women, of the smart, fast set. Her pale Canary satin shimmering under Irish point lace, which looked as if the swallows had stolen the cloud fringes from the sky, and woven them into meshes



of intricate patterns, so rare and costly it was, so softly delicate. A scarf of the same lace, folded over her bare shoulders, and was caught across her bosom, by a broach of gleaming gems. A rope of the same pure stones, clasped her white throat; and a dagger of brilliants bound the coils of her lustrous, black hair. A mass of pink roses, which sent out their sweet odours, nestled to one side of her corsage. A hectic flush crimsoned her pale, swarthy cheek, while her pouting, rosy lips, dropped "bonmots," as bright and sparkling as the light which flashed in her great, violet eyes.

"Ah, how spirituelle, a charm indescribable, she is lovely," cried St. Edmunds, the young son of the journalist, Editor of *Le Temps*.

"Those eyes, and the whole face, just what I have been looking for, I want the face for my Rachel," said young, struggling Guidhartes, who afterwards became so famous for his paintings of beautiful women. "What a story there must be behind all her frivolity, to have given her face, such a mixture of gayety and suffering. There has been a great love there, but it has been starved, and the memory of something lost craved for."

So we find her, she who was the cynosure of all that brilliant throng, which gathered about her that night, in her luxurious home, where they drank, played and danced, until the day broke over the City, and the sun lighted the hills of Montmorency, and gilded the waters of the Seine. Had she been hard, cold and mercenary, had she set a price upon her charms,



had she gone upon the principle of many of her sisters, and brothers too, that if I don't eat I shall be eaten? Had she been more covetous and avaricious, she would not now be dying in poverty. But she was like the butterfly, she loved to spread her gay wings to the sunshine, to glide from flower to flower, and sip the honey, as she went. She was thoughtless, gay, luxurious, indolent, trifling. But she had this one virtue, she was true to the man who led her to sin, and for whom she renounced so much.

So we find her on this sweet, May evening. The only faithful creature out of all those gay flatterers, was her black maid, her old nurse, who now sat at her side, with her turbaned head bent in her black wrinkled hands, glancing now and then through her tear dimmed eyes, at the pale, worn face of her mistress, her dear Miss Annette, whom she held in her arms, when she was but a few minutes old. Her long, slender, white fingers twined together tightly, knowing well that it will be but a few months or a year at the most, ere they will be parted forever. Alas, yes, what a price the woman pays for passion, the thing the world gives the misnomer of love.



## CHAPTER III.

### TANGLEWOOD.

FROM the heart of the old City, in which the great Market Place stood, there led a street, that ran its narrow length in a circuitous way, until it reached the northern suburbs, where it widened into a roadway, that was at one time considered the most beautiful carriage drive in the state of Missouri. Along this drive were cottages, old mansions, with spacious grounds, the remains, of what several years before had been large farms, but were now laid out in City lots, of from one to two and three acres, and sold whenever the demand came for ground to build a suburban residence. To the east of the road, lay the bottom lands, stretching off to the river, and upon the west side rose the uplands. To the southwest, the fields and meadows swept away to the hills, that at sunset wrapped about them a mantle of mist, glinted with all the hues of earth and sky.

A short distance from the terminus of the road, and on one of the highest sites, which was generally called the hill, stood a picturesque brown wooden cottage, old fashioned and quaint in its structure, with all sorts of angles jutting out here and there. There were porches where the rose and cypress vines twined



their tendrills over the railings and up and about the posts. But the prettiest place in all the porches, to the daughter of the house, was the kitchen porch when the morning glories bloomed in all their varied colors.

On the south side of the cottage was a wing used as a sitting-room. What would I give for one more glimpse of that lovely old room as I last saw it years ago flooded with sunshine; its large bay window facing the east and filled with flowering plants, that were the care and pride of the mistress of this unpretentious home. Its grand piano, its blue tinted walls covered with pictures, the faded carpet, and old fashioned horse-hair furniture, all rise before me as I write these lines. On the north side across the wide hall and leading off from the parlor, was a broad square room, that had been used as a spare bed-chamber, until about three years before our story begins, when it had been changed to an artist's studio, by adding a sky-light, staining the floor and wainscoating an oak and walnut, and tinting the walls a warm brownish gray.

The house stood back from the road facing the east, and had a frontage of about an acre and a half. It stood in the midst of grand old oaks, forest trees, pines and cedars. And from the road gate led a wide carriage drive up to its front porch.

This was the home of Peter Lawrie and wife. They had two children a daughter, Mary, and one son, Nelson Lawrie, a young artist. Peter Lawrie was tall and gaunt, and as straight as an Indian,



although not long before he had stepped over the threshold of sixty years. His hair was snow white, and his face pale, notwithstanding he worked much out doors in the sun. His light blue eyes a little dim now, had something of the soft sleepy expression of his daughter, Mary. He was known in the neighborhood of his home as a most honorable man, intelligent, well posted on all the happenings and affairs of the day; but considered exceedingly eccentric. One of his eccentricities, at least to his neighbors, (and our neighbors are quite observing of our peccadilloes), was his persistence in wearing an old, high, beaver hat, and when a man once gets wedded to a hat he sticks to it closer than a brother, and longer than he does his wife. Peter's hat, was supposed to have been black and shiney at one period of its existence, but was now as gray as a rat, and bent out of all manner of shape. But Peter clung to his old hat, as he did to his life, and was as tenacious of holding to it as he was to his old habits and notion of things. No matter how hot the sun poured down in summer, while working in his garden, or how much his wife importuned him, to change it for a cooler one, or a warmer one in winter, it was of no use. No matter how much his children ridiculed it, for it was often the butt of Nelson's good natured sarcasms, and his daughter's wit, as Mary in her gentle way, had much sly humor; it was all to no purpose. Peter Lawrie could not be induced to part with his old hat, it was part and parcel of him. And Peter Lawrie, without his old, bent hat, his habits and old-fashioned notions of



living, which he clung to as he did to his hat, would not have been Peter Lawrie. His clothes hung very loosely on his long limbs, but Peter's garden shoes were in every sense equal to his hat, if not far ahead, in the way of not being like any shoes extant. His feet were naturally immense, but his garden shoes, were two sizes too large for him, and often Mary, when she came upon him accidentally in some part of the garden or orchard, would burst out in a merry laugh, and exclaim: "Oh, you dear old father, you are splendid if you are the most obstinate of men."

Peter was not what the world terms a success, he had been a stumbling block all his life. He stumbled into things, and stumbled out of them with scarcely courage enough left to rise, but he would rise, only to trip up and over again. He managed by his wife's thrift and small income to live comfortably and educate his children, for Peter did love books and "larnen," as he himself, pronounced it in his yankee twang. And when his eldest son, now deceased, bought the cottage with its five acres of ground, he told his father, who had a real liking for gardening, and 'pawtering' about a place, that he could find plenty to do if he cared to cultivate small fruits and flowers, and have a kitchen garden beside. Fruit and flowers were things he knew his father and mother were very fond of. And Peter did make a success of his fruit, as the neighbors came from far and near to buy it.

Mrs. Lawrie was still handsome, her ample propor-



tions became well her age ; and her brown eyes had a way of gazing over her spectacles, with a gentle inquiry when addressed. She had a strong face, a large mouth, where soft curves played hide and seek, when in conversation. Her complexion in youth, was of a rich olive, and she still at fifty-five years retained much of its freshness. Her iron gray hair was worn in plain bands back of the ear, which added to a brow of much serenity. This serenity had helped to carry her through all her troubled years ; I say 'troubled' for how could she have lived so long without trials and heart breaks ? And when her four children grown to manhood and womanhood died, one after the other, she almost sank under her sorrow. And when her oldest son, the one who bought Tanglewood, thinking what a home it would be for father and mother, and hoping to live long himself to enjoy it, lay in that sleep, not that knoweth no awakening, but that throweth off the old covering for the new ; did not her heart strings almost snap apart and the terrible blow all but kill her ? But she never complained, never murmured, there was no strong arm on which she could lean, nothing to sustain her, but her great faith in Him who doeth all things well. Oh, faith, beautiful faith, guiding us on with thy shining hand, we follow thy light, over roads that are hard and stony, their sharp edges cutting deep and piercing the weary feet, leaving them sore and blood stained, but well knowing at the terminus there is peace, rest and joy.

She had Peter, her husband, of course, but Peter's



ways, were not her ways. He was very much in love with his wife, when he married her; as most men are supposed to be, and every one in her own New England village wondered at the handsome Susan Simmons marrying the tall gaunt Peter Lawrie, as it was well-known she could have made the best and richest match in the town. But Susan's large heart took pity on him, took him in and cared for him, as many a woman has done for a man before. Mrs. Lawrie felt many a time, that the expenses of Nelson's art, and Mary's musical education, had been too much of a strain on her slender purse. She often had to practice small economies and now that Mary was delicate, she was obliged to keep a servant. But did any girl, ever play Handel and Hayden, and the rest of the great composers like her? And what a consolation it was to her, and it paid her for all her self sacrifice, when she went on quiet Sabbath mornings to the Episcopal Chapel on the hill, to hear the large organ played by Mary, its sweet low notes rising in the hymn, higher and higher, then swelling out in strains, grander and grander, then slowly, softly, back to the low notes again, and die away on the ear. Then the young voice of Carrie Van Court, with the melody of the brown thrush, would burst forth with "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and every head in the church would turn to get a glimpse of its owner.

Mary Lawrie, the daughter of the house, was about twenty-three years of age. She was of medium height, but very thin, her head was shapely, her hair that sort of brown which is neither dark nor light,



that undecided shade that we see now and then in undecided characters. She wore it combed back from a broad and sensitive brow. The mouth indicated gentleness and sweetness, and the large, light blue eyes, with their heavy drooping lids, which gave them an habitual expression of, dreaminess seemed to become more limpid behind a pair of glasses that rested on a somewhat prominent nose. Her hands were remarkable for their whiteness, and their long tapering fingers, were the index of the musician. She was of a decidedly nervous temperament, and as full of moods as an April day. One time all tears, another all sunshine, but she was the very soul of music. Sometimes she played so exquisitely sweet, that it seemed as if the angels were whispering heavenly strains in her ear. Strains that carried her up, up, to the land where the saints dwell, where in dreams the soul catches a glimpse of the spirits that dwell therein.

In an alcove of her brother's studio, stood an easy reclining lounge, and generally thrown carelessly over it was a silk crazy quilt made of bright colors. Here Mary came afternoons with book in hand when the day's work was done, wrapped herself in the silk quilt to read and to rest until time for tea. She called the studio "The Haven of Rest," it was so cool, so quiet, so suggestive of thought. Away from the sitting-room, with its grand piano, its large bay window, where the morning sunshine poured in over the plants in winter, over the faded carpet, the black hair-cloth furniture, and threw golden beams on the gray-blue



tinted walls, covered with pictures. This room was the delight of her pupils who came and went and were never tired of singing its praise. But when noon came and the practicing of scales, the duetts, sonatas and the last piece of new music, had been played, Mary was tired, and when dinner was through she would as I have said, take a book, and go to the studio, wrap herself up in the crazy quilt, and read and rest until tea.

Nelson Lawrie, her brother, said one morning to Carrie Van Court, as she bounded into his studio giving two or three thrills of that lovely voice of hers; then after standing a few moments in silence before a sketch he was working on, exclaiming: "Where did you make that, it's a dream of beauty."

"It's all well enough to dream," he replied, taking a blink with one eye at the sketch, "but one must work hard and long hours, if one expects to accomplish much in this life."

Nelson Lawrie, as he stood that fair morning before his easle, with palette and mahlstick in hand, his navy blue round coat hanging in careless grace from his fine shoulders, a black velvet cap tipped on one side of his handsome head, did not look like one of the hard-knocked kind. Perhaps if he had not his mother's comfortable home, made so by her thrift in managing the small income she possessed, which gave him an advantage over many of his young brother artists, in not having to work for his daily bread; and which left him free to devote his time to painting, and out-door



sketching, he might have found the knocks so hard that they would have felled him at every blow.

He was about twenty-six years of age, above medium height, with a slender but strongly knit frame, a high broad brow, and eyes a dreamy, gray-blue, whose glance seemed to look down into one's soul. They were eyes that brightened with warmth at every innocent pleasure, and flashed out with indignation at an untruth, or an injustice done to others. The nose was straight until it came to the nostril which had a slight upward turn, a marked inclination to satire. A heavy brown, curling mustache gave but a glimpse of a mouth large, but well shaped and pleasing. Yet the lips which curved over the white regular teeth, when speaking gave one the same impression as the nose, the tendency to sharpen the edges of his sentences. But his strongest feature was the broad square chin, that told the observer the earnestness with which he pursued his profession.

Nelson's surroundings, that is, his studio, were clothed something like himself, in warm tints. The walls were covered with canvasses that were sketches of grand old trees, catching the light from soft skies, clear running brooks, ranges of hills asleep in purple mist. Scrapings of the palette-knife made for color effect, as he said. Also studies of children, and young mothers, a young girl painted in every attitude, as "Morning," "Spring," a "Wood Nymph," with large, soft dark eyes, following one where ever one turned. Bright rugs made by his mother's and



sister's hands, laid here and there on the polished floor.

"I'm not rich enough to have Persian and Turkish rugs," he would say, to his young artist friends, when they would speak in praise of their artistic beauty, "yes, they are as pretty as can be, without being expensive, besides I am always reminded of the dear hands that made them."

It was to this studio, that Peter also came after dinner, to read the morning paper, and the great political weekly, while Nelson took his half hour siesta on the old hair-cloth sofa, in the sitting-room with his hat tipped over his eyes. The sitting-room was a charming place to Nelson, it was so bright and sunny, full of the rich notes and bird-like trills of a voice he loved, his first love. Ah, talk as we may, the memory of that first, sweet dream, will last until the kind earth takes the remnant she has given us for a covering to the soul. Nelson had worked all the long morning, and the dawn comes early in May. He had risen at half past four, and had gone down to the river bank, where he could get a view of the bluffs and where the grand old sycamores bent over the water on the opposite shore rising up in the soft opal mist, with the sunbeams breaking through, and which he was becoming famous for painting. He laid down his palette and brushes, and took out his watch, the hands wanted but a few minutes to one, the dinner hour at Tanglewood, and as he turned to leave the studio, he heard the tinkling of the bell, which was as music to his ear, for Nelson was young, hearty and



strong. But Nelson, while he enjoyed his three good meals a day, did not live to eat, but ate to live. He went to the dining-room, and stood in the door that led into the kitchen.

“Well, father, how are the strawberries flourishing?” he said, addressing his father, who had just stepped on the porch.

“Wal we’ll have the purtiest strawberries in a few days, that is to be found in this part of the country,” said Peter, “and this is the purtiest day we’ve had for a long time. If this weather keeps on we’ll have plenty of ripe berries by the twenty-second of May, an’ asparagus, an’ beets, and the peas are coming on finely.”

“Father, you should know by this time, Nelson’s and Gartha’s weakness for strawberries. Between them and mother, they will disappear so fast, that you won’t know they are here until they are gone,” said Mary, coming to her father’s rescue, as they all seated themselves around the table.

“Mary, if your mother wan’t such an etarnal fruit consumer, I might make a little money out of the strawberries, but she’d eat, presarve and can more fruit than any presarving an’ fruit canning company in the whole United States, then I’m blamed if she’d have enough,” returned Peter, who found in his daughter’s kindly glances encouragement to ventilate a little on his favorite hobby.

“I don’t see, father, but what you can eat your share as well as the rest of us, and I’m sure we don’t have any too much for ourselves, by the time you



supply your regular customers. And by the time winter is over, we have to be pretty sparing until the fresh fruit comes in again," remarked Mrs. Lawrie, who dreaded to have her husband sell all his garden produce, knowing his propensity to get rid of money.

"If your mother had more confidence in me I'd have been better off to-day," returned Peter, taking a large mouthful of mashed potato and looking at Mary, but not exactly addressing his remarks to her, as they were meant for Nelson as well. "Yes, I'd have been a richer man, but she never did have any confidence in my undertakings."

Peter, like most men, of his kind, never gave his wife credit for her encouragement and setting him on his feet, after the many failures of his undertakings.

"What is more cooling and healthy than nice ripe fruit in summer, and it is so delicious in winter, besides what a blessing to have all one wants for one's own family use, without having to buy; I never could endure to eat canned stuff," said Mrs. Lawrie, gazing calmly over her spectacles at Nelson, but not without a merry twinkle in the soft brown eyes, which Nelson and Mary understood so well. "And it is so nice," she said, "to have a fresh dish of berries, when they are in season, or other fresh fruit, for Gartha, when she comes home tired, for since her mother's death she feels she must not stay home, sit down and fold her hands."

"Thar it is agin, thar it is agin, no confidence, no confidence, jist so, mother, go in an presarve, an can



until you fill the attic an celler, an every cupboard in the house. Go in, mother."

"The fruit shan't be wasted, I assure you father, our appetites are too good for that," said Nelson laughing, and glancing from under the corner of his eye, at Peter, who was a great eater, and could stow away more food, than any two ordinary healthy men. But when one came to consider the tall, bony body, and large frame, the big muscles, one did not wonder at the demand for the supply of wasted tissue.

And dear reader, would you like to follow me to the dining-room door, and take a peep at this quaint family, seated around the table? Perhaps you may think that having but one servant, they are not overly particular, but you will find it a mistake. Mrs. Lawrie was one of those fine old New England women whose race is nearly run, as the home life which produced her, is fast disappearing in our crowded cities. They were women who brought intelligence and executive ability into all their household arrangements and she was too well in years when she left her New England home, and came to the southwest, to feel any desire to give up the work that had become sacred to her, into the hands of incompetent servants, until forced to do so by Mary's delicate health.

The table was laid with a snowy white cloth, and blue china, not the blue china of the day, that can be bought in any of the china stores; but the old, old, style that had been laid away on the top pantry shelves for years. It had belonged to Mrs. Lawrie's



mother, and had been taken down and put in use because Nelson desired it. And if you could scent the odor of the well cooked and delicately seasoned food, you would not have blamed Peter for having such a prodigious appetite; nor did Peter, in all the days of his married life, ever sit down to a badly prepared meal.

“Mary, what kind of dessert have you?” asked her father, pushing his plate to one side.

“Pie, of course, mother might as well hide her head, if she didn’t have pie,” answered Mary, ringing for Arminta.

“Wal, let that thar curiosity of a gal, you’ve got out thar fetch it on.”

And in a few seconds Arminta appeared, carrying two flaky apple pies smelling of cinamon and nutmeg, and laid them on the table, beside Mrs. Lawrie. Peter’s title for Arminta was no misnomer, for indeed she was a curiosity, in every respect, so much so that she almost amounted to a monstrosity. She was very tall, and exceedingly thin, her arms and hands were remarkably long, their size and length being out of all proportion to the rest of her body. Her head was very small, resembling a good sized apple with a face on it, and balanced on a crane-like neck. She had coarse jet black hair, worn knotted in a wad at the back, the wad having a propensity to never stay in place, as one short end was sure to be straying down about the collar of her dress. Her eyes were like two peas, with inflamed lids, and in her motions she was more like a bundle of well oiled springs, than



a thing of flesh, bone and muscle; she was so agile and quick, and she had a way of noiselessly flying in and out through the doors and rooms. Mrs. Lawrie found her an excellent servant, clean, handy and quick about her work, and she seemed to take an interest in everything and everybody about the house; and especially Mary. She appeared to be quite solicitous about her health, often when Mary would be alone in the sitting-room, lying on the sofa with her eyes closed, her thoughts wandering away into dreamland, and when her eyes would open suddenly she would find Arminta standing over her, gazing down upon her, with her long bare arms folded, and her little pea-like eyes resting on her face, with such a strange expression, an expression which often puzzled the gentle Mary, and made her wonder what kind of a person she was. Then Arminta would ask in a blank way: "Can I do anything for you now, Miss?"

Mary would answer: "Nothing at present, Arminta." Then Arminta would disappear as silently as she came in.

A quiet smile rested on Mary's mouth, and dimpled the corners of Mrs. Lawrie's, Nelson winked at his sister, as Peter took the palm of his long bony hand and rubbed it over his mouth, Arminta flew out the door, then Peter fell to eating his pie. Peter loved pie and wanted it every day for dinner, and breakfast too if his wife would give it to him. For that matter the whole Lawrie family were fond of pie. How could one blame them, if one could but smell or taste Mrs. Lawrie's delicious apple pies and custard, and



above all her pumpkin and mince. I tell you, dear reader, and I, the scribe of this history, know from personal knowledge, there were never pies like unto hers, made in the whole United States. And you would not think it strange of Nelson Lawrie, when he was awfully pie hungry and his mother had helped him twice, (of course the second piece would not be quite so large as the first), he would offer his sister twenty-five cents for her piece, which she would gladly accept, and when she had the money shut up in her palm, she would say, with a laugh and a gleam of triumph under the drooping lids that she had the best of him, that while he had the momentary delight of satisfying his appetite, she had the more lasting one, the quarter would add a few more sheets to her collection of music. But it was just like men, they did so love their stomachs.

“Men are horrid animals,” would be Nelson’s reply.

Peter pushed back his chair, stretched out his long, lanky limbs, then rose from the table, and went into the sitting-room, where the family generally retired to after dinner and took from the piano the great political weekly, that had been his companion for over twenty years, and carried it to the studio, “the haven of rest,” where Peter after his long morning’s work dozed, read and rested, for an hour or two. Mrs. Lawrie seated herself in her own easy chair, where she was in the habit of indulging in daily afternoon naps. Nelson threw himself on the old hair-cloth sofa, and tipped his cap over his eyes, while Mary



before taking her departure to the lounge in the alcove of the studio, played his favorite airs the "Silvery Thistle," "The Melody of the Birds," with touches as soft and sweet, as the faint sougling of the pines made by the gentle south winds, on a summer even-tide. We will leave him dreaming his dreams of riches, love and fame, so that he may lay them as an offering at the feet of one whose destiny lies linked with his.

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## CHAPTER IV.

GARTHA ROWLAND.

ABOUT half a mile from Tanglewood, nestling among slender maples and tall cotton woods, was a pretty, white, six room cottage, with gabled roofs, bow windows, green shutters and wide porches, where the pale purple hyacinth vine, trailed over the railings, and up and about their posts in the soft summer time. This was the former home of Gartha Rowland, our heroine, and her widowed mother. The cottage with its grove of trees in front, its flower garden and kitchen garden at the back, and seven acres of ground lying to the northwest side of it, was purchased some twelve years before by Mrs. Rowland. Here she retired after her husband's death, with a small income, what was left of his estate, after the business had been settled, which was found to be very much in debt. And to use this income to the best advantage in furthering her daughter's education, and future welfare, was at that time her whole aim and thought in life.

When her part was accomplished, she said to herself, Gartha's intellect, grace and wonderful beauty, would do the rest. Yet there were things about the child, which troubled her mother. While she was

studious and intelligent far beyond her years, and all her expectations, still she could not understand the thoughtful bent of the girl's mind, the indifference to all worldly honors, and the utter unconsciousness of her great personal charms, which her mother set so much value on, and which she hoped would lead her to the goal of her ambition; that was to see her daughter well settled in a home of her own; married to some rich and distinguished man, before she was laid away to rest, beside the husband she had never ceased to mourn.

Gartha was in her eighteenth year, and had just graduated from the State Normal school, when her mother sickened and died. This sunk the girl for months in the deepest grief, for her love and her life were bound up in her mother. She would have given up her most cherished schemes of doing good, of being helpful to eradicate the evils that press so heavily on mankind, and married to please her, even though her mother's choice of a husband, was commonplace.

Mrs. Rowland and Mrs. Lawrie had been friends since the widow came to reside at the Maples. Mary and Gartha, who had been schoolmates and companions, strengthened the ties of this friendship by theirs, which took on a more poetical form, on account of their youth. After Mrs. Rowland's death, Mrs. Lawrie who would have liked to mother every boy and girl, who was motherless, insisted upon Gartha's coming to live at Tanglewood. All that fell to Gartha at her mother's death, was the cottage



and the seven acres of ground that was now laid out in town lots, and the four hundred dollars yearly income, and now the rent of the cottage, which brought her about five hundred more. After things were settled she took up her home at Tanglewood. Now she was free to make a path for herself, to follow her dreams and aspirations, the dreams she had dreamed when she sat beside her mother in the long winter evenings, conning her Latin and French, every once and a while taking her eyes off her book, to become lost in thought. Her mother often chafed under her silence, her seemingly indifference to all the things that most interested her, things which were trivial, and of little importance to Gartha, but made up the sum and substance of her mother's life.

Gartha was one of those priceless gems of womanhood, that to meet for a moment, is like inhaling the sweet scent of some rare flower, the fragrance of which lingers long afterwards in the memory. At eighteen years, she reminded one of a half-blown blush rose, waiting for the sun and dew of time, to develop its delicate beauty into the splendor of the full blown flower. To tell an untruth was to her thinking the most deplorable and pitiable act that one could be guilty of. "What use is it to tell a falsehood?" she would often ask herself, unless to gain something at another's expense; to gratify a vanity, or to find vent in some malicious feeling harbored towards another. Do those who tell a falsehood, to hurt another's character, think it falls unheeded? Oh, no, there is the stain which never can be erased, the

pain in the heart, when the lie so wantonly told, comes back as if upon the winds, and is whispered in the ear of its object."

When she heard her own sex speaking slightly of one another she would say to herself: "How can those who hold so much power for good or evil, yes, even the destiny of nations, for are not women the mothers of little children, the future generations of men, and women? How can they abuse their power, by gossip and bickerings, listening to envious tittle tattle, when their tongues should rather sing the praise of as simple and common, but beautiful a thing, as the green grass at their feet. We turn away from deformity of the body, but is not deformity of the mind worse? Every light word spoken, every thoughtless deed, is made harm of, every good impulse and generous act, is turned to selfish motives, when looked upon with eyes of envy. Everything beautiful is made to appear ugly; this dries up the healthy life blood, shrivels and shrinks the soul, which is the greatest of the Creator's creations, and should be the receptacle of all that is pure and holy."

These things would sadden and depress her sensitive nature, for a while, but it would rebound, and she knew all people were not alike and the world was still fair and joyous, a fit place for gods to inhabit. She would often in her long talks with Mary, express herself, in a way that was new and strange to the gentle Mary.

"I would so wish to see all men God-like, at least they should live such pure and noble lives, that it



would entitle them to be counted as the sons of God. I should like to have some such men as friends. Why shouldn't friendship exist between men and women, of the same tastes and pursuits? Women would gain by listening to their more bold and vigorous speech, while on the other side, men would gain in refinement, character, broadness and purity."

"My dear Gartha," Mary would answer, "there may be a few men and women such as you speak of, scattered over our great land, but it would be impossible to bring them together, and as things exist, the first man you would have a friendship for, the world would have him your lover."

"I have no doubt, but what you are right, dear girl," would be her reply, accompanied by one of her low musical laughs, whenever Mary's more practical view of things, checked her in her visions of the ideal life she would make for herself.

This was Gartha Rowland, at the age of two and twenty years. What she will ripen into later, time and this history must reveal. I am afraid my pen can do but little justice to a beauty like Gartha's a beauty which Nelson Lawrie had many times tried to put on canvas but with all his genius had failed.

"Don Cæsar!" was often his exclamation, that burst from his lips, while trying to paint her portrait; "I can't catch the expression, and without the expression her face loses half its charm."

She was tall and straight as a poplar tree, but with the slender, willowy grace, which men so much admire in women; but to the writer, she was more like the

elm, she had all its grace, its beauty of line, and strength. The whiteness of her forehead was enhanced by ripples of brown hair, that rare brown which modestly hides its hues, until some stray beam of light changes it to tarnished gold. Her eyes were large, of a dark gray tinged with blue, and when the face was in repose, were moist with a tender dreaminess. The nose was straight, the mouth with its lips arched like a bow, showed exquisite refinement, but if we will take a nearer glance, we will find strength and decision in their soft, upturning curves; and that the delicately pointed chin denoted purpose.

Tanglewood was to Gartha an ideal home; it seemed to her she had always lived there, that she was one of its productions, that all her past life, with her mother had been but a dream. Here she was surrounded by books, pictures and music; things her mother's home was scantily furnished with; but they were treasures she hoped might be hers in the future. And now she was dwelling under the same roof with an artist, had been for nearly four years. She could, any hour of the day, go into his studio and feast her eyes upon sketches and paintings that were ever a delight to a mind which drank deeply of all the beauties and sweet things of nature. There had grown up between this young, handsome, gifted artist, and herself an ideal friendship, that she felt would last until the end of her days. Their admiration for each other had been from the first mutual, he was one of the men, she would like to have peopled the earth with, one of the sons of God. Why this ideal friendship did not



ripen into something between two who were by nature suited to each other in all respects, is one of the unaccountable things of life. Perhaps if Carrie Van Court his sister's pupil, with her wondrous voice, and dark, piquant beauty, had not first arrested his eye and his heart, fate might have been kinder to both Gartha and him.

But at this time she was free and happy as all young girls are, and thought that Tanglewood, with Mrs. Lawrie and Peter, Nelson and Mary, and Carl Goetze and his flute, her girl dreams came true, and could there be any one more picturesque than Carl, anything sweeter or more tender, than the love he gave to Mary. And her deep but more passive love for him. Yes, Gartha in this home of the Lawries, was a new beauty, added to that which is already beautiful. To every one in the house, she gave something better and finer, clothed them in some new and shining garment, woven from her fancy. What respect and love, she gave to the kind and calm Mrs. Lawrie, and with what delicacy she won Peter's affection and admiration. One day while sitting alone in the studio with his daughter, he remarked to her: "Wal, Gartha's quite an addition to the family, it was never famous for beauty, Mary, excepting the little your mother an' Nelson lays claim to. Yes, exactly jist so."

Carrie Van Court had met Gartha but seldom before she came to reside at Tanglewood. At first Carrie was inclined to resent her appearance there, to look upon her as an intruder. But as the weeks passed, Gartha became to the ardent, impulsive girl,

a new interest, a fresh study, and as Mary once said, about her, a new light had come into their lives. There was scarcely a day, when they grew better acquainted, that Carrie didn't take a run over to Tangiewood. Often Carl Goetze would be there before her, and they would go into the sitting-room, where Mary would take her seat at the piano, and with Carrie's singing, and Carl's flute accompaniment and the birds outside, there was to Gartha's thinking never anything like it in the way of music. Then when Carrie would go back to her own home which would be a little while before her father's return to dinner, she would go into the library, throw herself into one of the easy chairs, and exclaim: "It's true, I am not of them, as mamma says, I could not be of them, no matter how hard I should try. Mamma is right, they don't belong to our set. I wonder what set I do belong to! I don't belong to mamma's and I'm sure I shall not join Mrs. Topping's. I shall have to create a set of my own, have a salon, where I can gather about me the people of my own choosing." She would then bound up from her seat, give trill after trill, leave the library and run upstairs to her mother's room.

One hot, sultry day, Carrie had been confined to her mother's room, all the morning, until she paid her usual afternoon visit to the Lawrie Cottage. She made straight for Mary's room, expecting to find her there; but instead Gartha lay on the bed. She had donned a long, loose, white wrapper that revealed the willow grace of her slender figure, the light from a



window, on the opposite side of bed fell upon her coils of hair, which had strayed from their comb, tinging it to rippling masses of russet gold. She laid down the book she was reading, as Carrie with flushed cheeks threw herself into a chair, and her hat on the floor beside her.

"I have just stolen away from mamma, she has been in the sky-sckews since breakfast, Charlotte and myself succeeded a little while ago in getting her to sleep, and I like a bad girl took advantage of the sleep, by slipping out as quietly as a mouse, leaving Charlotte in my place. And now my Gartha, I'm going to take a little quiet snooze myself."

Half an hour later she lay sound asleep on the floor. She had slipped on a white dressing gown of Mary's and spread under her, a bright, crimsoned flowered comfortable. There she lay, her small bare feet, with their pink toes sticking out from under her gown, one bare rounded arm thrown over her head, her black coils of hair lying in a heap on the pallet, looking like glossy, satin ropes, and making a striking contrast to the comfort's rich color.

Gartha had taken up her book again and had become so absorbed in its contents, that she neither saw nor heard Mary, until she stood over her looking down upon her.

"What a spirit you are, to come so silently and unperceived into the room, but not unfelt," said Gartha, gazing up into Mary's face, with a smile that told her there was no measuring the esteem and affection in which she held her.

"You should say rather, what an exceedingly interesting book, my stamping upstairs, was equal to father in his garden shoes," replied Mary, showing a small, slender foot in a neat tie.

"Nevertheless, you are quite spiritual," returned Gartha.

"Yes, I am somewhat ethereal, so far as being minus of flesh, but aside from that I cannot lay claim to anything spiritual," said Mary, drawing up a low willow rocking-chair beside the bed, and seating herself. "Do you believe in spirits?" she asked with eyelids half closed and leaning her head against the back of the chair.

"I cannot say just what my belief is in that respect," replied Gartha, with her eyes raised to the ceiling, "I have never given the subject thought enough to form any belief in the communication with departed spirits, if that is what you mean. Still I have certain feelings in regard to the unseen. I think that spirits are everywhere about us, that they are now in this room, that they watch over us, guide and influence our lives. The better, the purer, our lives are, the higher and purer the spirits we attract. All life is spirit, matter is but a dead thing unless pervaded by spirit. Scientists have talked and written so much of matter and of life originating in matter; but take away life and see how quick matter decays. We are composed of soul and body. The Saviour said: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." I suppose He meant another kind of spirit, the spirit of eternal life; the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the



soul can be dead if the Holy spirit does not dwell in it." She picked up the book, she had been reading.

"Here is Carlyle's French Revolution," she continued, "I can hardly find words to express my thoughts of it. To me it is a great tragic poem, both sublime and terrible; it depicts one of the saddest and most fearful conditions of a nation. It shows what the human race may become, and how low it may fall when our watchword is rationalism, and our religion materialism, sensualism. It shows the love of power in man, and the pitiful thing he would make of his fellow man. This revolution was the result of generations and generations of ignorance, human wrongs, tyranny and hard, sterile poverty, that strips life of every vestige of beauty. The rich and high born, became from so much material power, steeped in immorality, licentiousness, debauchery and every conceivable crime. And in the neglect of their fellow beings, the great masses, which they were born with the right to govern, they ruled with the iron hand of despotism, until human beings grew into twisted, crooked and ugly things, and rose up in all their hideousness of revenge and hate, and struck their deadly blows on the heads, which should have cared for them and seen to it, as children of the state and the nation, that they were properly taught all that is best and good. But when they rose they trampled under their feet, all that was sacred and holy, love, marriage, home, wives and children. 'Away with them!' they cried, 'give us desecration, carnage!'" she paused a moment, her

cheeks were flushed, her delicate nostril dilated and quivered, as she cried: "Oh, how good it is to be free, to have some of the quickening spirit, that Christ speaks of; to have youth, health, strength, and apply them in being useful to others." She raised her hand, and pushed back the rings of gold brown hair, from her white brow.

"Who is it that says, 'To sit at thy feet, Oh, Socrates, is learning enough for me,' to sit at thy feet, Oh, Carlyle, and learn of thee," said Mary.

"I should prefer rolling round here in cool Oriental fashion," said Carrie, turning over on her side. She had awakened when Mary first came into the room, and lay with her back to the girls, listening to Gartha's eloquent outburst, "to sit at Carlyle's feet we would have to be dressed for the occasion, and it's so jolly on a hot day like this to have a whole floor for one's bed, and to do just as one pleases." And Carrie laughed, her young body and limbs taking all sorts of aerial poses.

Gartha instantly came down from her heights, and gave a soft low gurgle, as she looked at Mary, whose smile passed to her eyes and rested there. Then Gartha rose from her couch and seated herself in a chair near the window.

"I have heard that Carlyle was a dumpy, grumpy, old man, but even if he were as Topping would say, 'The most dear, delightful old man in the world,' I can't read him. I have tried, but he is too heavy for me," and Carrie rolled over on her back, swaying her large palm leaf fan, with an energy which caused



rather than mitigated the exclamation, "Dear, isn't it hot?"

"Nevertheless," rejoined Mary, "I should like to have met the Author of 'Hero Worship,' and to have had the pleasure of listening to his talk, how delightful the recollection would be in after years."

"Froude says, his voice was like the roll of a great cathedral organ, and Emerson likens it to a trip hammer, with an Eolian harp at the end," returned Gartha, the light from the window showing her face all aglow with inspiration. "When I read him, he carries me along with him to heights where I grow weak and faint. His intellect is so strong and rugged, so far reaching. But afterwards come the delicate touches, and like a lion with his great paw, he lifts me tenderly down and softly soothes me back to strength. Then again his words convey the idea of ocean waves, gradually gathering force, until they come like huge billows, roaring, surging and moaning, as they come dashing against the rocky shore. Yet who does not love the music of the sea, who would not love the music of his voice!"

"I have no doubt of it, my dear Gartha," said Carrie, with a rippling laugh, so brimming over was she with mischief, and determined to see only the ludicrous side of the subject. "If I saw three beautiful young women sitting at the feet of my husband, if I had one I should be awfully jealous, besides it would strike me as being so funny I think I should have a fit." She gave another ringing laugh, rolled over and over on the floor like a kitten playing with a ball.

"Oh, you naughty girl, you deserve a good shaking," cried Gartha, rising and leaving her place by the window. Running across to where Carrie lay, she drew herself down beside her, and folded Carrie in her arms and shook her until they both lay over on the floor, exhausted from laughing. Mary sat quietly by, but one could see by the twinkle in the half veiled eyes, that she was enjoying the sport.

"If duty did not call me home," said Carrie, sitting up and shaking out her curls, after her tumble with Gartha, "I should like to sit at the feet of my lover, all the rest of the evening."

"Can you not give him an hour of your society after tea, he would paint with more inspiration on the morrow," said Gartha.

"Do you think so, my lily queen? Love is sweet, my dear, but it is also bitter, every sweet has its bitter, I believe that is the proverb," returned Carrie, all her brightness, her fun-loving spirit gone, as she drew on her long, pink, silk hose over the dimpled toes.

"Still, life is not worth living without love," answered Gartha, who was standing by the bureau-glass combing out her radiant hair, "love is often an incentive to high aims, and noble deeds. Friendship comes next, but love is the culmination. To love comes to us all sooner or later, in some form."

"How wise you talk, my Gartha, but you are as free as the winds, you do not have to ask any one's leave to spend an hour or two in the society of the adored one. You are your own mistress, you can do



as you like. You see, my Gartha, I am hampered on all sides, I have those who are always demanding obedience, always placing restriction upon me. If I were as free as you, I would roam over the whole earth, singing like a thrush."

"My dear, I am no more free than yourself. I have my duties also; I have self-imposed tasks. I toil all day like the bees, and there is my conscience and my reason, ever setting my will aside, and proclaiming to me that there is happiness only in being useful, and in self-sacrifice."

"When you begin to talk of reason and conscience, you get beyond me, my Gartha. By-by, Maim," she cried, she had finished dressing and stood with her hand on the door knob. "By-by," she trilled, throwing a kiss to each of the girls, then she bounded out of the room, and down the stairs. When she reached the lower hall, she stole on tiptoe into the studio. Nelson stood by a large cabinet of drawers and shelves, where he kept his small sketches and all his painting material. He had just finished his work for the day, and was scraping the paint from his palette, and putting the little dabs into a shallow white dish of water. He did not see her until she stood beside him with a pout on her lips, and raised her large lustrous eyes, black as night, and beaming with love to his. He looked down into her face, then with a quick motion threw his palette on the table of the cabinet, and began to pace up and down the floor.

"What, angry with me!" she cried, as he was going to pass her, but he stopped and impulsively caught

her in his arms, and kissed her on the cheek. She tore herself from his embrace, rushed into the hall, out the front door; down the path to the road, walked until she came to the end of Tanglewood park, where she turned up and crossed the common a short cut to her father's house.

When she reached her home, she ran up stairs to her room, locked the door, threw her hat on the floor, and flung herself into a chair and burst into passionate tears. After she had cried her fill she rose up from her seat, wiped her eyes, and went and stood by the window. "I know my marriage with Lawrence Carst will be wicked and base; I shall never, never be his wife," she exclaimed. "Yet I know my father will never listen to a marriage with Nelson Lawrie. He would disown me if I thwarted his will, and banish me forever from his presence, and never speak to me while I lived."

She left the window, crossed the floor and seated herself again.

"No," she murmured to herself, after a pause of some moments. "I am not of them; I could not be of them; my path in life leads far, far away from them. Oh, Gartha," she cried, the tears streaming afresh down her cheeks, "I can never forget your eloquence this afternoon, the beauty of your face, the sweetness of your voice, as you spoke, and the heavenly expression in your eyes. Oh, my Gartha, if I did not know you to be true and noble, I fear I should be very much inclined to be jealous of you. We are but human, and who can live near you without loving you?"



She was roused from her soliloquy by hearing the sound of voices in the lower hall ; she jumped up from her chair, brushed the tears from her eyes, and stood a moment listening. Yes, it was her father and Lawrence Carst. She went to the mirror and stood before it. The hot tears had dried her eyes showed none of the effects of weeping, but were bright and hard, and all the color had left her face, and with it, all Mary's and Gartha's better and purer teaching and influence.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE VAN COURTS.

JUDGE VAN COURT'S spacious mansion stood in the midst of large grounds, some two or three blocks to the left of Tanglewood. For many years the house had been considered a country residence, but the city had gradually crept up and extended its limits, until it was now within a square of its gate. The house was a fine old-fashioned, solidly built structure of red brick, with green blinds, and high white stone steps leading up to a broad piazza, which reached across its front; its square sides being broken by small porches and balconies in the second story. It stood in the midst of tall, grand old forest trees, and the place was known as Forest Grove. The house had undergone no change since it had been built by the Judge's father, many years before, for a country residence, with the exception of the yearly cleaning, papering and painting. The large drawing-room which ran the whole length of its west side had none of the existing exuberant display of meaningless bric-a-brac that we see in these days, even in the homes of the moderately well-to-do. But the dark polished walnut woodwork, the deep pile of rich velvet carpet, the old-fashioned rosewood furniture, upholstered in pale sea-green



satin damask, with trailing vines and soft pink roses; the same damask with point lace curtains draping the windows. A few fine bronzes stood on the white marble mantelpieces, that were richly carved. A few copies of the old Masters in oil hung on the violet, and gold tinted walls, such as the Madonna of the Lilly, the Madonna of the Chair, by Raphael, and others; and mixed with these were some rare old engravings. Across the wide hall, wide as the drawing-room, and as long, with a spacious winding stairway, that was a delight to eye and heart, was the library and dining-room, furnished in furniture adapted to their use of the old massive sort. And built out from the library, was a large conservatory. The sleeping rooms and sitting-room were on the second floor, they were large and airy, and full of soft sunshine, and from the west windows could be seen at evening many delightful sunset effects.

Judge Van Court was a Southern gentleman of the old school, believed in the ancient régime, the days of chivalry, when manners were manners, and gentlemen were gentlemen. Judge Van Court was a reflex of his house, as his house was of him. He had not exactly grown musty or rusty, his mind as well as his wardrobe and house had its yearly cleaning and renovating; and some of the badly worn things were replaced with new. Yet when speaking of the present he was often heard to express his dislike of the times, and that he hated the hurrying, burrying, elbowing mob of the day.

“Yes, sir,” he would add with long strides up and down the floor of the library, “sociability, manners, courtliness, and the art of conversation have all gone out with the vulgar mob that have come in.”

Judge Van Court was rich, his father had been rich before him, and he himself had made quite a fortune at the bar. An eminent lawyer, thoroughly versed in law, brilliant, persuasive, with a deep, mellow voice, full of rich tones, a voice he had handed down to his daughter, and which generally won the jury in a case to his side. But the Judge was in many things narrow. A man can be very clever and brilliant, and at the same time narrow. He never indulged in light reading, although some of our most gifted scientists are great fiction readers; but the Judge believed that the books of this and the past century were all trash. He read law, the daily papers, and Milton and Shakespeare, were his favorites; they were great poets. Then, according to his thinking, the world stopped writing, (and perhaps it might have been better off if it had, but it didn't, for there are voices and numerous voices, and only the few have the true ring.) He cared little for science, and less for art; he was somewhat acquainted with the old Masters, and the great Greek sculptors, which he had seen when a young man, when, after leaving college, he made a tour of Europe. But like his favorite poets, after them art degenerated. He might have had a faint idea of the modern American artist, as some poor devil who was always up in the clouds, and if practical at all, a kind



of impecunious dexterous mechanic. Oh, America, with all your boast of millions and millions of dollars, you have a starved art and literature, for no matter what the genius of a man or woman may be, if he or she has to toil for bread and wait long years for recognition, until the heart dies in them, and the hand that could have wrought so much cunning, lies still and cold. The glowing colors of the tragedy on canvas are faded, and the story but half told. The poems of the nation unsung, and the great book, unwritten. While you to your shame roll in millions of dollars. Is this American patriotism; is your only love for the flag, which you prate so much about, to use to put dollars and cents in your pockets? Trade, trade and the flag, we hear it dinged in our ears, from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof. Well, if so, I will take it upon myself to say, it is a mean patriotism. It is not true patriotism.

Mrs. Van Court was a small, dark woman, with soft, dark, doe-like eyes. She had been an invalid for years, with no purpose of ever getting out of her invalidism. Mrs. Van Court never had a purpose or a desire to accomplish anything, or rise out of her helpless condition. Her husband petted and humored her in all her whims, and provided her with every luxury; then he left the burden of caring for her and entertaining her to Charlotte, her colored maid, and her daughter Carrie, who loved her mother, but loved her father more, and she in return was the apple of his eye

"Mamma, mamma," cried Carrie, bounding into her mother's room, her tangled curly hair falling about her face, her cheeks flushed and her eyes beaming with happiness and delight.

"My child, my daughter, where have you been all this time? I'm sure you have not been since half after eight, and it's now nearly noon, taking your music lesson. I'm afraid, my child, you spend too many of your mornings with those very strange people, the Lawries; you know, my child, they are so very odd," said Mrs. Van Court, with a mixture of reproof and fretfulness in her tone. She was lying back in her chair, clad in a white morning robe, and wrapped in shawls, and the day outside like summer.

"Dear mamma, I think the Lawries are very nice people, such an interesting family," replied Carrie, a little of the bright color leaving her cheek.

"My daughter," said her mother, picking up her crochet work from her lap and letting it drop again in a nervous way, "if your father knew you spent so much of your time with the Lawries, I'm afraid he would be greatly displeased. It is well enough for you to go there and take your music lesson, but aside from that it is not best to have much to do with those very peculiar people."

"But mamma, dear, you have never met any of the Lawries; you have seen old Mr. Lawrie; he is quite eccentric, but so intelligent, mamma. Still you know nothing of their home life, it is really beautiful, mamma, so different from ours. I'm aware they are



not so rich in worldly goods as we are, but their home is lovely; and as for cooking, why, mamma, we have nothing to compare with Mrs. Lawrie's cooking."

Mrs. Van Court's crochet work had dropped in her lap, and her almost transparent hands lay listless on the arms of her chair.

"Carrie, Carrie," she exclaimed, "how came you so intimate with those people? And if you persist in keeping it up I shall have to inform your father. It is out of place in one of your position to be on such terms of intimacy with those very strange people. Mrs. Lawrie may be a very good woman in her way, but the old man is so decidedly queer, so extremely odd," and Mrs. Van Court lifted her thin, white hands and rubbed them together in an agitated way, drew a long breath, closed her eyes and lay back in her chair.

"Oh, mamma, dear, I never knew what life really meant, or how beautiful it was until I met the Lawries. Mary Lawrie teaches me many things besides music, and I could not be in a better place, or better society, for a few hours every day, than with her and her mother. And there is Gartha; oh, if you could but just see Gartha, you would wonder at her loveliness, or how any girl ever came to be like her. And I'm sure you would admire Nelson Lawrie; he is so handsome and noble, besides being so gifted; I am certain he will some day win fame and fortune by his genius." She said all this feeling that her own stronger nature could overcome her mother's weaker one, and any aversion she might have towards those

whom she considered plebeian, and far beneath her daughter in every worldly sense. But her father's will she knew was law. He would treat Nelson with consideration and courtesy, but from his aristocratic standpoint of life, for Nelson Lawrie, a poor artist, to dare to make love to his, Judge Van Court's, only daughter and heiress, would be a different thing.

"My child, you alarm me," exclaimed Mrs. Van Court with nervous twitching of the eye-lids, "what has your father and myself been thinking about not to have kept a closer watch on your going and coming. Carrie, I should think that that old Lawrie wears would terrify you and frighten you so you would never want to go there."

Here Carrie burst out laughing, as the tall, gaunt form of Peter Lawrie, in his garden hat, rose up before her, and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Oh, my dear child; oh, my dear daughter, those strange people have bewitched you, and your expectations so brilliant."

"There now, dear mamma, I shall be good," said Carrie, wiping the tears from her eyes, and taking both her mother's hands in hers, and kissing her on eyes and cheek. "Come, dear mamma, be calm, and I will open the windows and let in the fresh air, it will revive and strengthen you; and just listen to the birds singing; did you ever hear anything so sweet and delicious? And Carrie dropped her mother's hands and lifted the sash of the window, before her mother had time to compose herself.



"My child, you are so impulsive, I shall catch my death in this draught." Mrs. Van Court had been catching her death for the last ten years; she had housed and pampered herself until she shrank and wilted like a hot-house plant, if the least breath of fresh air happened to blow upon her.

"Let me order the carriage for you, mamma; a ride this lovely morning in the fresh air will do you good, put some of the color in your cheeks that papa tells about when you were a girl my age, when he paid court to you. What was it like? The tinge of the blush rose, oh, I know you must have been very beautiful." And Carrie kissed her mother again on cheek and eye-lids.

A tap at the door, and Frank, the black butler, announced Mrs. Topping. "Good gracious me! there is that horrid woman," exclaimed Carrie, jumping up from her seat beside her mother, and taking refuge in a corner behind the great massive mahogany bedstead, where she thought she would be out of sight of the intruder. Mrs. Topping was the dear friend of Mrs. Van Court, as such dear friends go in the 'Toppings' and Van Courts' world. The acquaintance of many years had done away with all formality between the two families, and Mrs. Topping was what might be called a privileged character in the Van Court household, so she was asked up to Mrs. Van Court's room where Frank with all the politeness of the old-time negro servant ushered her in.

"My dear Clara, how are you feeling this morning?" said little Mrs. Topping as she entered. "I

have just returned from a drive; you have no idea how inspiring the air is, to be sure."

And little Topping drew up a chair beside her friend, and laid her small, black-gloved hand caressingly on Mrs. Van Court's arm. "My dear Clara, I think of you so much this lovely weather, I think of you at eve, Clara, at night, and when I awake in the morning, I think of your patience and your sweet resignation to your fate. But, Clara," she went on, pushing her chair a little distance back from her friend, "you have Carrie, and your husband, the Judge," here she gave a sigh, "you can lean on him, there is nothing like a husband's love, and you know Clara, while Felix lived I never knew what care or responsibility meant. We lived together over twenty years and his harshest word ever spoken to me in all that time was, 'my dear, precious Jane.' It was these words, morning, noon and night. But I'm not lonely, oh, no, I feel that he is ever with me. Who is it, Andrew Jackson Davis, or John Freeman Clark, who says, 'The spirits of the dear, beloved, departed dead are ever with us, ever hovering about their loved ones.' If it weren't for my children I should be very lonely; still, if I hadn't children I would give myself up to the cultivation of the beautiful, ah, how inspiring it is to be sure. My dear Clara, it lifts one's mind up from the trivial things of this life."

Carrie pretended to be reading a book, but at this the small foot came down with a stamp on the floor.

"Now, my dear," continued little Topping, not observing Carrie, she was so fond of the sound of her



own voice, "don't you think a trip abroad would do you good? When I was abroad the last time, I purchased so many beautiful, artistic things, things that are not to be found in this country, at least not so artistic, you know, as they are to be found abroad, on the other side of the water. Now, you know, dear Clara, we have nothing in this country to compare with the Christmas and Easter things they have in London and Paris, and, oh, the loveliest Japanese ware, such as fans, banners and all such things. And the last six months I spent in Paris, I bought quite a supply of clothing, enough to last me for two or three years. Oh, I shall never again have a dress made in this country. When I need another supply, another replenishing of my wardrobe, I shall go abroad. I'm sure a trip abroad would do you good, Clara, it would indeed, oh, how inspiring it would be, to be sure; it would lift you right up out of this, indeed it would, Clara."

"I think, myself, a trip to the old countries would benefit my health," answered Mrs. Van Court, with a faint flush of the cheek, and a momentary brightness in her eyes, "we spent two years abroad, the Judge and myself, after we were married, and the old world had a great charm for me then."

Carrie was making a desperate effort to keep back a sneeze, and in so doing rose and tumbled over her chair. She picked it up and sat down on it again.

"Why, Carrie, I was not aware you were in the room," said Topping, with a snap of her small, brown eyes. "I hear you are making great strides in your

music. Oh, how I envy you the pleasure of coming in daily contact with those dear, delightful, quaint, artistic people. Think of a home where music and art reign supreme. Ah, if I had but your advantages when I was your age, but they were not to be had then, they were not so common, how much more cultivated, elevated and soaring my mind would have been. Well, Clara, I must go now, if you will only pick yourself up and go out to ride, it would do you good. I shall soon come again," and adjusting her black shawl, she took leave of her friend.

"The old dame," said Carrie, coming out of her corner, when she heard the hall door close on Topping, "advising you to go to ride when she has kept you in all the morning. Nelson Lawrie says she is nothing but a bundle of pretenses."

"Carrie, Carrie, my child, what has come over you?"

"Mamma, she reminds me of a coon," said Carrie. Rising and going over to where her mother was seated, she threw her arms around her neck, and carolled at the top of her voice, until the echoes reverberated all through the house, out of the doors and windows, and died away in the rustle of the forest trees.

Little Mrs. Topping was a widow, of forty years and over, with reddish hair, that she wore rolled up from a very narrow forehead. She had small, snapping, reddish brown eyes, a sallow complexion and false teeth, which helped along whatever else there was false about her. A thoroughly modern woman,



was Mrs. Topping, with all the modern taste for new things, which are made to appear old. Her husband died shortly after he built the fine, gray-stone front mansion, a block or two from the Van Courts', in which he tried to outdo all his neighbors' houses. Of course, Mrs. Topping's house, like herself, was also modern, the floors and woodwork upon the second floor were stained in imitation of real wood, and in the sleeping rooms costly rugs lay here and there, on the polished floors. But Mrs. Topping's boudoir, ah, how artistic, the latest thing in curtains draped the windows, willow chairs, painted white and gold, a toilet table dressed up in tucks and ruffles like an infant's robe, and when not in the wash, like the curtains, the smoke and dust of the old sooty city played havoc with their color. The same with her brass mounted iron bedstead, which was very much ruffled and laced, and as for bric-a-brac, how any one of Topping's taste could do without bric-a-brac, but as it is too numerous to mention here, we will not afflict the reader with a description of it.

The parlors and library had inlaid floors of oak and maple, and had rugs of Turkish and Persian manufacture, and genuine at that. Low divans, luxurious upholstered easy chairs, and Chinese and Japanese fans and banners hung in every conceivable spot about the rooms, and on the walls the eye searched in vain for a resting place, until it found the few paintings in oil, which were interspersed here and there. Still Mrs. Topping must be artistic in the way of mantlepieces in her drawing-room and library;

they must be of the old English style, such as we see in country houses in that land of country homes. They must have high shelves built clear to the ceiling, looking very much as if one's grandmother's cupboard, with its rows of plates, had been brought in from the kitchen and suddenly planted down before one's eyes. But the shelves of Mrs. Topping's mantelpiece were filled with all kinds of amateur productions in the way of painted china and brass plaques.

It was quite an affliction for little Topping to have to dress in mourning, but when she thought of the dear one, whose words to her were never harsher than "My dear, precious Jane," they were a healing balm which compensated her for the most, as Carlyle would put it, the most blindingest, harmonisingest, artisticest costumes she might have worn in the last two years. For Mrs. Topping did not care to be considered esthetic, nor Theosophic, nor Buddhistic, as so many of her sisters do, but simply artistic. She loved dress and would pay any price for it to trick out her small body, she would lavish hundreds of dollars on gewgaws, but she would scrimp and grind, when she came to spend a dollar to further the art, she affected to love so much.

"Oh, how soothing," she said, as she entered the door of her room, and threw herself into one of the white wicker arm-chairs, "to rest one's eyes on something decorative," and Topping gazed at the corner of a fifteen-cent Chinese fan, the perspective of which was so thrilling that Topping couldn't tell whether it was herself, or the Chinese figures that seemed to be



walking off into space. "It's strange," she murmured, reflectively, "that the Van Courts, with all their wealth, don't decorate their home a little. It would kill me to live in such a barn, but Clara never did have any taste."

## CHAPTER VI.

LAURENCE CARST.

THE hands of the library clock had just pointed to six, seven being the dinner hour, at the Van Court house. Carrie was seated by an open window in her room, which was as pretty as old-fashioned massive furniture, white muslin curtains, a few bits of bright silk embroidery, a few sketches in oils of herself in different positions, made by a young artist, and this artist's photograph standing on an easel, could make it, and showed that the occupant was not without her romance, which sooner or later comes into every young life. The soft scented air played lightly about her face, and tossed the stray rings that rippled over her brow. There was moisture in her large, dark eyes, as they gazed out on the old, splendid trees, whose leaves were tipped with the gold of the lowering sun, and answered all unheeded in their sweet whisperings, what her heart was asking. Her cheeks, that had flushed but a few hours before with the gladness and brightness of youth, were now pale. The words so lightly spoken by her mother, in the morning, and by her seemingly so carelessly received, had thrown a shadow over the day, and brought dark forebodings to her mind. She knew her mother's



weaker nature could be easily overcome, but her father; whatever his decision might be, in regard to her love for Nelson Lawrie, she would have to abide by it, and for the last two years it had been settled between him and her mother that Laurence Carst was to be her husband.

She loved her father dearly, and honored him above all men, and their natures were similar in all respects, save where his was masculine, hers was essentially feminine. She was too young to have formed any independent ideas of life; she had been born and bred to luxury and wealth; and had from infancy been surrounded by young companions of her own station. If she had never met and become intimate with the Lawrie family, she would have gone on with no higher ambition than to become a brilliant society leader. Perhaps an exception to her kind, as she had many womanly graces and noble qualities of mind and heart. It was her visits to the Lawries' home, for the purpose of receiving instructions from Mary in the training of her voice, and which brought her in contact with Gartha Rowland, that first made her think and feel that life was real, that it had a meaning; high ideals to be reached after, and that their lives as lived, and purpose in life, was different from hers, and the idle people she met daily at her mother's house. Nelson and she had liked each other since they first met, and as they were thrown more and more together, his intelligence, a certain distinguished bearing, manliness, a courtesy and graceful way of doing things, won her heart, while she dazzled

him with her beauty and lovely voice. Yet both knew there were obstacles in the way of their love, which caused their passion to grow deeper and stronger, as the days went by.

She was roused from these thoughts, by hearing her father's voice in the lower hall, then the voice of a younger man which sounded familiar. She rose up in her quick, impulsive way, and with a passionate movement of her head, wiped the tears from her eyes; then crossed the floor and stood before her dressing case glass, raised her shapely arms and took the comb from her head and let her lustrous raven hair fall over her neck and shoulders.

"I shall tell papa all, tell him that I do not love Laurence Carst, how can I when I compare him with Nelson Lawrie?" she said to herself, as she brushed out her long, inky tresses. "I could make a fortune with my voice," she murmured, rolling up the thick coils and fastening them with a white pearl comb, "but I fear I would fail in the attempt. I was born to this, I could never throw away my inheritance, nor my father's love."

She robed herself in a pale blue dress of silk and wool, and pinned a crimson rose in her hair, and at her throat, and left the room. On her way down stairs, she saw Charlotte, her mother's colored maid, drawing the invalid's chair out to the front porch. As she entered the library where her father was seated with Laurence Carst, she greeted her father with a kiss on the cheek, then turned to Laurence, who had risen, and gave him her hand.



"Papa must have been surprised to see you, as we did not expect you so soon," she said, a faint blush suffusing her cheek.

"It is as much of a surprise to myself, as it is to the Judge, to find myself here," he answered, stroking his brown, silken goatee, with a white, delicate hand, and resting his light steely-blue eyes, softened for a moment by a passing gleam of warmth, upon her. "It wanted but fifteen minutes to two when I had Dolphus pack my valise, to meet the fast train which leaves Jefferson City at two-thirty. The Legislature does not adjourn for a month yet, but I got so deucedly tired of the place and the long debate over the Lenox gambling bill, that I wanted to take a run somewhere; anywhere for a change. Still the City and some people in it, had the most attraction for me," and he pulled the corners of his mustache, and bowed graciously to Carrie. "Those fellows from the western districts of the state are as hard as flint to deal with, they have wills of iron."

"I am sure papa will enjoy your visit greatly," said Carrie.

"Always welcome to the Van Court domicile, my dear boy," said the Judge, looking at Laurence with a flash of pride and affection in his fine, dark eyes.

Laurence Carst was of medium height, but of a strong knit, willowy frame, and as graceful as a deer in all his movements. His hair, if a woman had combed it from her fair brow, would have been the envy of all her sisters. It was such a brown as the color of a maple leaf when touched by the first November

frosts, and lay thick and crinkly on his small but well shaped head. His heavy short cropped goatee and mustache, of the same shade, blended with his ruddy complexion and the light steel-blue of his eyes. His long, pointed nose, was the most aristocratic feature of his aristocratic face; his thin, flexible lips were never known to soften towards an opponent in a debate, or a conquered foe. He was considered the most brilliant orator in the state Legislature, older men saw in him a certain power to wield in the future, for good or evil; and they predicted that it would not be long until he would be heard from in congress and the United States Senate. Women thought him handsome and fascinating, and to be the recipient of his attentions was quite an uplifting in their own estimation.

He was rich for a man of his age, the owner of a large plantation in Tennessee, left to him by his mother, a favorite cousin of the Judge, between whom a tender passion once existed. Green Lawn was the name of an estate of two thousand acres of the best farming land in the State of Missouri, and all under cultivation. This was his home, inherited from his father, he being an only child. These two estates, with considerable real estate in the City, and his political aspirations, made him one of the most desirable matrimonial matches in the state. It had been understood for nearly two years between himself and the Judge, that he was to be his accepted son-in-law. He was now nearly thirty-four years of age, and a man must marry some time, especially a



man who represented so much in solid wealth as he did. And who was more suited to be his wife than the young, lovely and accomplished daughter of Judge Van Court.

Laurence Carst was a Southerner by birth and education, and blended with a cold, cynical nature, much of the South's soft grace, and all its mellow, liquid speech. Although brought up from his cradle in a Christian household until he went to college, he soon, as he himself said, threw off all such old-time beliefs. And when he graduated from the Yale law school, he took nothing for granted; faith and religion had no place in his vocabulary. Science and the law did away with all such stuff. Not that he was so deeply read in science or scientific discoveries, Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley, and some of the French scientists, had been skimmed over while at college. He never questioned whether science had any sophisms profane, and erroneous theories; that there was but human brains back of it, and that each human brain had its own amount of vanity, and that it was its business to upset the facts and so called theories of its fellow human brain, to make its own appear the greatest. Yet Carst had not, as he believed, entirely shaken off or eradicated from his mind his early training; whatever was best and honest in him came from it, and the gentle mother who taught him at her knee to lisp the Lord's Prayer. And whatever stings of conscience he had in after years at misdeeds done in the body, were from the simple and

pure teachings of the Divine Master, he at this time affected to ignore.

He entered politics as most men do of his time and generation, not to benefit their fellow-man, and to try and make better laws for the majority of struggling men and women; but from choice and love of power. In 1896, he had just made his *début* in the political arena, and fought against Bryan on the silver question, with a blind prejudice and tenacity, in which he brought all his brilliant speech and vituperative sarcasms to bear. He was in no sense a democrat, only in name and party; he had no sympathy with the masses, but was essentially a class man, and looked upon the toiling multitudes as so many *canaille*, the oxen to be hitched to the plough. He was a pronounced type of the young men of the present time, of his place, education and attainments. Cold, cynical, unbelieving, no faith in one's own kind; passionless, yet full of greed, avarice and desires insatiable. What has produced or created this type, is a problem that is not the business of the novelist to enter into, theirs being simply to chronicle and draw with an artist's hand, the lights and shade of character. Perhaps it is the age we live in, for one sees them everywhere; in the trades, clerks, offices, business, professions and politics.

Still had Carst lived in the days of the renowned handsome, elegant Lord Hastings of Edward the Fourth's court, he might have laid claim to some of that interesting statesman's gifts, also some of his



intrigues and libertinage. But, unlike the gallant Lord, he had never as yet had a real passion in his amours, never experienced a great love for any one woman, as Hastings did for Katherine Nevelle. But Laurence Carst was still young, and just stepping upon the threshold of his career, and had many qualities of character still undeveloped.

As he rested his deep glance on Carrie's full, rounded girlish figure there was admiration in it, but no love; at times he felt piqued at her indifference towards him, and there was something in her large, soft eyes, when she would raise them unconsciously to his face, that with all his polish of manner, he could not meet, for there was no guile in her heart, all was truth and innocence there.

"I think I hear your mother coming down stairs," said the Judge, rising, and going into the hall where he met his wife, leaning on the arm of Charlotte, her colored maid. "My dear Clara, I'm so glad you found courage to come down to dinner," and he took her hand and lead her out to the front piazza and seated her in her own easy chair.

"Tells ye what, massa, mistiss allers do pick up when Massa Laurence comes," said Charlotte, wrapping a white wool shawl about her mistress's shoulders.

"I am pleased to see you looking so well, dear cousin," said Laurence, bending low before Mrs. Van Court, and taking the white hand she held out to him in his larger and stronger one, but not less thin.

"Really this is both a surprise and a pleasure, dear

Laurence. You are, of course you are going to be with us some time, I hope, make us quite a visit."

"I am obliged to go South for a few weeks to attend to some business, then back to Green Lawn, where I shall be detained for a number of days with my steward," he answered, stroking his brown mustache.

"Has Carrie come down?" inquired Mrs. Van Court, a little agitated.

"My dear, don't worry about Carrie. She has been in the library with Laurence and myself for the last half hour, and I think she has gone to inquire of Frank the cause of the delay of dinner, as it is nearly an hour late," replied the Judge, taking his watch from his vest pocket and looking at it, as he took two or three strides up and down the porch.

"Our daughter has taken to doing all manner of odd things here lately, such as looking after the servants for one, I think it best to let servants have their way, it saves so much trouble," said Mrs. Van Court, drawing a deep breath, as if exhausted from her late exertion.

"Good," returned the Judge, "my mother used to say that there was no house but that needed looking after, no servant so good but what required watching."

"Then, Carrie, with all her accomplishments, does not disdain a knowledge of housekeeping," rejoined Laurence, as he seated himself in one of the wicker chairs, beside his cousin. Mrs. Van Court gave Laurence one of her sweetest smiles, a woman is never too weak or too much of an invalid for the exercise of



her fascinations, especially when she has an object in view.

Then Frank, the black butler, announced dinner, and Carrie made her appearance in the doorway of the hall; her father took her arm and led the way, Carst followed with Mrs. Van Court. The dining-room was a large, square room, with a polished floor of oak and walnut, a great carved sideboard of old antique oak, stood in an alcove of the wall. The oak chairs were cushioned in crimson leather; a fine bronze clock, ornamented the white marble mantle-piece, some engravings of hunting scenes, after Sir Edwin Landseer, hung on the panelled walls, and the high, broad windows which reached from floor to ceiling, opened onto a porch, where the honeysuckle vines twined up about its posts, and filled the room with delicious odors. Judge Van Court believed in the ceremonies of the dinner table, the old Southern régime was carried out to the letter in the hospitality of the house. There was no place where a gentleman showed himself a gentleman so much as at his own table. So thought the Judge, and he behaved accordingly. And at this dinner, and every day the table groaned under the weight of solid silver, rare china, cut-glass, and all the plenteousness and delicacies of the season.

When the different courses had been served, and dinner finished, the family rose and went to the library, where, after a few minutes' pleasant converse, Carst led Carrie to the piano. He was a great lover of music, and a fine feminine voice was as much of a

pleasure and exhilaration to him as a glass of the rarest old port, or sparkling champagne, of which he was very fond.

"It has been some time since I had the pleasure of hearing you sing," he said, standing by her side, while he helped her to select a favorite song, "and from what I have been told, your voice has improved beyond all our expectations; not but what I have ever thought your voice the sweetest and most bird-like I have ever heard," he added, passing his delicate white hand with its gleaming ruby ring on the little finger, through the heavy shocks of his russet tinted hair, with no softness in the steely glitter of his eyes, as he rested them on the curls that kissed both her neck and cheek.

"Thank you," she replied, with a blush, "your praise both flatters and encourages me, and I shall keep on trying to do better."

Then aria after aria followed, singing them with such sweetness and pathos, pouring out her whole soul in the rich notes; in the swells and vibrations that rang out through the forest trees, until they seemed to bend and sway to their melody.

"Pray, who is your teacher?" inquired Laurence, when she had finished.

"A Miss Lawrie," she answered, glancing at her mother.

"I must admit you have improved wonderfully under her tuition," said Carst, with an air of interest.

"My daughter, you will have to invite Miss Lawrie to dinner some day," said the Judge. Rising from



beside his wife and placing his hands behind his back, he took two or three strides up and down the library floor.

“Oh, papa, I shall be delighted to do so, but I am afraid Mary will not accept, she is so very shy and retiring, besides being quite eccentric; but you would find her exceedingly interesting.”

Then Carrie rose and left the library, and Laurence Carst, who did not want to leave the Van Court mansion, or his cousin, the Judge, or the Judge's wife, without a full and decided understanding that the Judge's daughter was to be his bride, asked for her hand.

“You are the only man, out of all Carrie's would-be suitors, whom I am willing to trust her future and her happiness to; I consider you in every sense a fit husband for one so gifted by nature, and with every social advantage of wealth, and position,” said the Judge, whose fine head with its white hair, his piercing black eyes and handsome face, were set off by the deep red silk plush of the easy-chair, he was seated in. “You are of the old stock, the blood of the Van Courts, and Van Houstans, flow in your veins. You have wealth and great talent, and I hope in a few years to see you in the United States Senate. No reason in the world why you shouldn't go there. And when once in Washington, your voice heard in the halls of the white Capitol, making and unmaking laws for your country,” continued the Judge, “I hope Carrie will then teach the hurrying, burrying, elbowing mob, a lesson; yes, sir, a lesson. She has something

besides mere money to back her. I believe in blood, sir. I am an aristocrat, but no snob, and when Mrs. Senator this and Mrs. Senator that, gives a dinner party, where the guests walk on violets and crushed roses, I hope my daughter will show her good breeding by giving her dinners simplex munditiis. I am a Greek in that respect; their luxury was the essence of delicacy, toned down to the most exquisite refinement," said the Judge. Rising and walking to the mantelpiece, he leaned his back against it a moment, then made a few paces across the floor and seated himself again.

"Let me just give you a little advice, my dear cousin; advice is seldom thankfully received, but you will be running for Congress next year. I am an older man than you, I myself hate politics, never could endure the mob that a politician must necessarily come in contact with. When you go to the halls of Congress, which of course you will, never lend assistance to any scheme where money is to be the reward. You will have plenty of such overtures made to you; even a Judge of the state courts has plenty of them; but if you consent you are lost, for sooner or later the very men whom you serve in that way, if at any time you should happen to stand between them and their advancement in public favor, would be the first to crush you with this very same weapon, when chance afforded them an opportunity."

Nothing could be more easy and graceful than Laurence Carst's position, as he sat or rather reclined in his chair, with his head thrown back, his elbows



resting on its arms. And there was a strange gleam in his steel, blue eyes, and a cynical smile played about his thin lips, as he listened to the Judge, and stroked his brown silken goatee.

“Laurence, my dear,” said Mrs. Van Court, playfully. Laurence was all attention, his smile changing to one of interest, and something like warmth taking the place of the cold glitter in his eyes. One thing Laurence never forgot and that was his Southern courtesy, to the opposite sex, “how can you be so selfish as to want to take my daughter from me, my only daughter; how am I to live without her, my Carrie? She is all devotion to me, anticipates all my wants and wishes and seldom leaves my side. My beautiful Carrie, my dear daughter. Still, my dear Laurence,” she went on in a pathetic tone of voice, “I cannot live very long, at best, but a few years at the farthest, and when the time comes that I must bid farewell to Carrie, my dear husband and to life, what a consolation it will be to know that I leave her in the keeping of a husband who adores her, who will be all devotion to her.”

“My dear cousin,” returned Laurence, bending over and taking her white hand, that rested listlessly on her lap, in his, “remember in giving Carrie to me, you are not losing a daughter, but gaining a son. The more love and devotion she shows to you, is an evidence she will not want in the affection and sympathy a husband requires from a wife.”

“My dear Laurence, how very generous of you, you are in every way fitted to be the husband of our

beautiful daughter," replied Mrs. Van Court, tapping her fan in a quick nervous way against the arm of her chair. "I can think of no future for Carrie," she added with a twitching of her eye-lids, "but one strewn with roses."

"Clara, that is foolishness; the old adage is a true one, 'There is no rose without a thorn,'" said the Judge, "and Carrie is too much of a woman to expect her roses without thorns."

"Howard, Judge, you frighten me, our daughter is too much inclined to that way of thinking now. You will, my dear Howard, have to be very guarded about what you say in that respect before Carrie," rejoined Mrs. Van Court, dropping her fan in her lap, and rubbing the palms of her hands in an agitated manner.

"Carrie is a Van Court, a conservative; she can be aristocratic and democratic when it suits her; there is no more democratic person than a man or woman born of a long and pure line of ancestry," said the Judge, with a bright glance at his wife.

Laurence Carst looked at the library clock, then at his watch, and as Carrie did not make her appearance he rose saying he had an engagement at the Delavand House at nine o'clock, and would return later.

"Howard, my dear Howard, I must speak to you about our Carrie; I fear she has already imbibed strange notions of life from those very peculiar people," said Mrs. Van Court, when she and the Judge had retired to their room.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MUSIC OF THE MAGIC FLUTE.

It had been one of those early June days, indolent in warmth, with delicious, dreamy skies, which lend their hues to blend with the tender colors of opening bud and leaf. A day when earth gives us a foretaste of heaven, when the air is laden with all the sweet, wild odors of fields and woods, songs of birds, gentle zephyrs, that linger in kisses on the cheeks of mortals. It was a day that faded and deepened into a soft, misty twilight. The windows of the sitting-room of the Lawrie Cottage were all open, a student lamp burned on each end of the piano, and one on the center table, shedding a halo of mellow light over the table, and making all other objects in the room recede into shadowy lines. Mary was seated at the instrument and standing by her side and accompanying her on the flute was a thick-set, picturesque looking man of nearly thirty-six or forty years of age. His hair was an iron gray, and stood straight up from his fine brow, back from his ears in a sort of bushy negligence. His beard was thick and cut in Vandyke style; his thick, drooping mustache partially concealed a mouth where sweetness, delicacy, and exquisite refinement, all found a resting place. It was

a mouth that any woman would have loved to have kissed, as she would that of a baby, so free was it from all grossness and sensuality. His large, flashing, black eyes, indicated something of the smouldering fire, mingled with the sadness and poetry of his race, and matched well with his rich dark Italian skin. His dress was a little on the careless order, his old-fashioned black cloth coat hung loose from his shoulders, his shirt bosom, though spotlessly white, looked mussed and crumpled, the wrist-bands turned back from a small, white hand, presumably to hide their frayed edges. His trousers, to be in harmony with the rest of his attire, were large and ample, and so wide at the bottom that they almost covered his exceedingly small feet.

Carl Goetze's grandparents were Germans and were quite young when they left their native land, in search of riches in the new country. They had two children, a boy and girl; the boy going South married an Italian beauty, who was the mother of Carl. She died, leaving Carl at the age of twelve years motherless. His father, not knowing what to do with his boy, sent him to an Eastern school in New York State, near the great City, where he also attended the best art schools. At the expiration of his school term he plead with his father to send him abroad for a few years to pursue his art studies; his father, wishing to do all he could for his only son, gave him what he could spare from his comfortable but limited income. After his return from Europe, where he had spent three years, he was induced by hearing of the



wealth of the cities of the West, and Southwest, to emigrate, thinking he would not have so many older and more famous men to compete with. But Carl found the West too much absorbed in money-making, to care to take interest in art.

Carl was not a genius, the bright wings of that divine gift had never brushed his brow with its flame, and perhaps better for him it hadn't. (Genius is not to be envied; its sufferings are deeper; its pains more poignant; its struggles greater; its reward less, and it is seldom understood during the life of its possessor.) But Carl had a great deal of talent, giving to his sitters honest and sincere work, far in advance of the small sums he received in payment for his labor; that is, if we measure talent and brains by the money it brings. He had no faculty for getting the rich to his studio, besides it was a poor place, to take those who were accustomed to wealth and luxury. It was in the fourth story of an old building, and was meanly and scantily furnished, so far as mere furniture went; but the walls from the washboard up to the ceiling, were rich indeed, rich in thought and color. They were covered with studies of heads, the human figure in every position; copies of the old Masters, made for the sake of color. The floor was bare, without tint or polish, nor was it ever very clean, the dust generally lying thick on the chairs, and easels, on the sketches, picture frames, and the few old models. Not but what he paid well the owner of the illustrious name of Washington Scott, a young negro, to take care of his studio and sleeping room. But Wash-

ington Scott found him so easy, so indifferent to his own comfort, so thoughtless of his own interests, that Washington Scott, true to the characteristics of the black race, shirked all he could.

"Oh, my life, you're a shiftless fellow, Scott," Carl would exclaim, when things got to looking too bad, "I shall have to dismiss you, I shall not listen to any more excuses, you keep my house in shameful order, that I blush to my hair, when my sitters come."

Carl would never observe the dust or cobwebs, until his sitters awakened him to some sense of their thickness. Washington Scott would answer with a grin: "Wal, Massa Gots, I'se, I'se ben jes so run wid wok, it 'pears like ebery genaman wants his office tended to fust. An' Nancy, my ole woman, she's ben sick an kem mighty neah gibben up de ghost; yes, sah, taken night fo' las, shuah as you lib, Massa Gots." Washington Scott would grin, and for the next day or two clean a little more thoroughly, but before the end of the week Washington Scott would drift into his usual shiftless habits.

Carl was one of the artists who did not know how to put his money to the best use; it is true his income was small, but had he spent it to advantage it would have been more than sufficient for his needs, as his wants and tastes were simple. Still we cannot narrow down broad and generous natures, to the meanest of economies; yet, how often the generous natures are a prey to the grasping and avaricious. How well the freckled faced waiter, at the little restaurant where he ate his meals, knew when ~~he~~ had more than



his usual amount of change, twenty-five cents at the end of the week, was not enough for extra attention, it had to be fifty. Did ever a ragged bare-footed boy or girl, who looked pleadingly up into his face, go away empty handed? Didn't Washington Scott cheat him in every possible way, by appropriating every article of clothing, he happened to find lying 'round loose; such as neck-ties, pocket handkerchiefs, hosiery, and all such like, that fell in his way, and he thought Carl wouldn't miss. Didn't Mrs. Lanagan wash his linen in water mixed with lye, sometimes in soda, and other ingredients, that are left so mysteriously at the back doors of our homes, with the knowledge that the servants are positively forbidden to use them.

"My soul," he would cry, exasperated beyond endurance, "it isn't but a few months since I bought myself a whole new outfit of linen, and now it is all falling to pieces." Mrs. Lanagan would do this notwithstanding she had soap and plenty of water, and with a little honest labor could have returned his wash, cleaner, smelling sweeter, and with a clear conscience and good feeling, that his linen would last a year longer. But why blame the Mrs. Lanagans, they only imitate those in higher places.

Carl had been coming to Tanglewood for nearly three years; he was introduced to the Lawrie family by Nelson Lawrie, Nelson and he having met a year before at the studio of an artist friend. It was one of those occasions where two opposite natures meet, and instead of being antagonistic, each have a strange

attraction for the other. Carl's careless bonhomie, his unselfishness, his freedom from petty jealousies; his desire to give Nelson the benefit of what he had gained in his many more years of experience; and a certain picturesqueness, which charmed and entertained the younger man. To Carl the freshness of Nelson's youth, the fine, handsome face and figure, the love and enthusiasm for his profession, and above all his genius; these were a constant source of delight to him when in his company.

"Oh, my life, you possess that which no master can teach, that which the great Master of all has endowed you with, genius," Carl would exclaim, as he paced up and down the floor of Nelson's studio after viewing one of his paintings.

"Yes, my dear Carl, but how few have that next best gift, the power to recognize genius, when set before them in any particular work, if it steps out of the beaten track," would be Nelson's reply.

"You're right; few have it; few possess it."

Carl had no loved ones, but an aunt who was his mother's sister, and his godmother. She lived in a small village on the Hudson river. So Tanglewood had become a second home, and most of his leisure half hours were spent with Nelson and Mary. He had learned to love the strange and gentle girl, to see the beauty of her nature, to understand her whims and peculiarities, which were a part of the fatal gift, genius, as she also, like her brother Nelson in painting, had genius in music. Sometimes she would receive him in a mood all brightness and



gayety then her smile was fascinating, lingering a while in the curves of the kind mouth, then stealing slowly over the features until it rested in the eyes, where it shot out like a sunbeam from under the long lashes, lighting up the plain face, and giving it a beauty of its own. At such times her conversation would be bright, piquant and witty. Then, again, when he came, she would receive him with a face pale and void of expression, the drooping lids half closed over the eyes, the delicate hands limp and seemingly unable to move. In these moods she would hardly speak, it was when she seated herself at the piano that she showed what power was in the slim, tapering fingers, what music and sweetness were in her touch, what depth of feeling lurked behind her fragile frame.

Carl paid no heed to these little eccentricities, but loved her more and more as the days went by. He had never spoken to her of his love, as he felt too poor to think of marrying, but kept hope green in his heart, and waited patiently for better times. She, on the other hand, felt that his companionship and devotion had become necessary to her happiness, and that life would be intolerable, an utter blank without his presence; but as for marriage, she could not think of it. She was not very strong, and she could not make up her mind to leave her mother, and her mother's home. Oh, no, she could not think of marrying. Oh, no, not yet.

"My soul, what perfect time you keep; how those slender fingers make the instrument speak," cried Carl, as they finished an aria from the loveliest, but

now almost forgotten opera, "The Magic Flute." He laid his flute on the piano, and picked up from the music stand, near him, a palm leaf fan, and began waving it to and fro in a vigorous way.

"Every day we play together I can see that we improve," said Mary, raising her limpid eyes to his face, with one of her slow, sweet smiles, that would be as sunshine to his heart for hours.

"I believe, mother, you have been asleep," said Mary, turning around on the piano stool, as Mrs. Lawrie yawned and began rubbing her eyes.

"Oh, dear no, who could sleep while listening to such heavenly music? I have not been sitting here at all, Mary, dear, but carried up, up, to where the saints dwell; to a land where there is no toil nor pain, nothing but sweet peace, rest, joy and love forever. It has been many a day, since I have heard yourself and Carl play anything in the way of music that is so soulful and restful as the piece you have just now finished," said Mrs. Lawrie, her brown eyes moist and her manner less calm than her wont.

"I am so pleased, Madame Lawrie, to hear you speak so appreciatingly of the music of 'The Magic Flute.' I myself think it very fine. Ah, those old composers, nothing like them now; the heart is all out of things, and there is neither tune, tone, nor feeling in our time," returned Carl, who still kept up a great fanning.

"If father were here he would say our playing unfitted mother to dwell on this earth," said Mary, who loved to tease her mother in an affectionate way



"Your father has gone to his room, and I must follow, but don't stop playing, Mary dear, as the flute sounds sweeter a little distance off," said Mrs. Lawrie, and rising she went out to the dining-room, but soon returned, bringing in her hand a pitcher of cool water.

"Here is a fresh drink, Mary; I thought Carl would like one, and I wonder what keeps Gartha out so late."

"I do wish Carl would stop blowing that eternal, long-winded machine of his, I want to go to sleep," said Peter, as his wife opened the door of their room, and strains of the "Last Rose of Summer" swept across his ear. Peter had already turned in, his lanky form stretched out full length, his feet touching the lower posts of the bed, and his night-cap almost concealing his face.

"I don't think a long-winded machine an appropriate name to give to any musical instrument, especially the flute," answered Mrs. Lawrie, closing the door to soften the sound that came from the sitting-room.

"Wal, Susan, you always did tower, I don't tower in that direction myself, besides I never could stand that eternal banging and blowing. In the morning I don't mind it so much as I'm in the garden, or down in the orchard, but at night in the house, it makes my ears sing and my head buzz worse than screeching children at a Sunday-school."

"You're very selfish, Peter; you forget how you stop me right in the midst of my pie and bread bak-

ing, to have me listen to the long political articles in the weekly, and if I object, you're terribly put out. You know you like me to listen, but I don't care about politics," replied Mrs. Lawrie, taking her spectacles off and wiping them carefully before she laid them in one corner of her work-basket, their usual bed for the night.

"Wal, jist so, exactly jist so; I don't tower, I know, Susan, but every man and woman should be conversant enough with politics to know who the President of the United States is, but blame me, mother, if you could tell whether it is Cleveland or McKinley the present occupant of the White House, if I didn't keep you informed by reading the Weekly to you, an' you ought to be thankful that I'm so obliging," responded Peter, triumphantly, blinking at his wife from under his night-cap.

"Indeed, father, you should be very grateful that I listen; it does you so much good to have me for an audience."

"Wal, it's kind a nateral, that I should want to instruct you and have you participate in what I enjoy."

"Hush now, Peter, and go to sleep; I want to listen to this piece they are playing," said Mrs. Lawrie, closing her eyes and snuggling down her head on the pillow, preparatory to going up, up, where the saints dwell.

"You're etarnally towering, mother," growled Peter, turning over on his side, where he was soon lost in the variations of snoring, which was anything but in harmony with the variations of "Whisper What



Thou Feelest," that Carl was then pouring out in long passionate strains of soul pleading love, on his flute. Yet, one could see no response to them in the expression of Mary's face. The features were still as marble, the eye-lids half closed, as the thin flexible fingers swept over the keys; how delicate and tender their touch, what emotion, what intensity, quivers through every fibre of her fragile frame, as she strikes each note, and gives Carl the prelude to time.

But Carl thinks only of the music, and what he wishes to express through it; his face is flushed, the veins in his forehead stand out in cords, his throat swells, his chest heaves, his eyes are raised to the ceiling, with a look of ecstasy. Now he bends low, as if he would pour out all the pent-up feelings of his heart, in her ear. He bends to the right, and to the left, now his head is thrown back, and as the sweet notes float out on the soft night winds, the night made dreamy by a pale, crescent moon; the birds wake up and answer in tender twitters; the moths and beetles dance to them; while hundreds come trooping in through the windows, humming and buzzing, and chasing each other so mad are they with frolic and fun. The buttercups open their dewy gold leaves; the daisies modestly listen; the peach and apple bloom send forth their perfume to greet them; they swell and vibrate through the trees; until they seem to bend and sway in echoing responses. Then the oaks carry them to the maples, the maples to the elms, and the elms waft them over the house-tops to Forest Grove and whisper them in the ear of a young

girl, standing at the gate, her face pale, her large antelope eyes gazing wistfully towards Tanglewood.

"My life, what perfect time you keep, what inspiration in those slender fingers," said Carl, laying his flute on the music stand, which stood near the piano, and taking Mary's hand between his two palms, he lifted it to his lips. Then they both rose and went out to the front porch. "I wonder where Nelson went," remarked Mary, as she seated herself in one of the wicker chairs.

"I think I saw the light of his cigar pass the window, but a second ago, perhaps he and Gartha have gone for a stroll down to the river bank, to study moonlight effect on the water; and where Nelson fails to find beauty, Gartha will suggest it, for she is all moonlight herself," returned Carl taking a chair beside her. Then running his hand down in the ample pocket of his coat, he brought up his large meerschaum pipe. "You're very kind to allow me this privilege," he said, striking a match.

"You have had that privilege for the last three years, yet you always speak of it as one recently granted," replied Mary with a quiet smile.

"I would forget the courtesy due you, if I did not speak of it, it is such a great privilege to be allowed to smoke in your presence. My life, what a beautiful night it is, how I wish I were twenty years younger," he said, thoughtfully, as he puffed the light smoke from his lips.

"Why should you wish to be twenty years younger? I should think the twenty years more added to your



life would be to your advantage in experience," replied Mary, with a glance of tenderness from under the drooping lids.

"But when one has lost so many opportunities, and time, that cannot be recalled, besides one cannot always grasp things, and make them subservient to one's wishes; I mean that one is not always equal to the situation."

"But with these exceptions you can begin over again and improve the present, and look to the future for the results hoped for," she answered quietly, but with sympathy.

"Yes, but it is so hard to retrace one's steps," he returned, with a long pull at his pipe. My love, you look pale tonight," he said tenderly, after a pause of some minutes, hugging close his meerschaum, "are you not feeling well?" He took her hand in his.

"I am never so strong in warm weather; I lose my color and grow thin, but when the cool days come I pick up and regain my flesh and strength.

"I have been coming here a long time,—yes, a long time," he said, still holding her hand, "but to me the last three years have been the happiest of my life. I have been hoping and waiting for better things, for something better to offer you, Mary, than what I have." His voice was low, as if the words were choking his utterance. "I have but little of this world's goods," he continued, after a silence of some moments, "if you will accept of that little and risk the future with me, I shall try to make you happy, and will love and cherish you until the end," he stopped

here, the last syllable dying away in a hoarse whisper.

“Dearest Carl, I am aware of all you say; willingly would I share your lot, your love is and has been untold riches to me; still I think we had better wait a while longer; I do not feel yet as if I could leave father and mother. Nelson talks of going to Europe in the course of a year or two, to remain some time; the house is large, and if he goes, we can have his part of it, as I know mother will not listen to my leaving her for another home.” And Mary laid her other hand fondly over the one that held hers.

“Whatever you say, dear, it is for you to decide, but we are bound to each other for all time and eternity.”

“For all time and eternity,” repeated Mary, as they both rose and stood with clasped hands.

“Yes, my love, my love, for all time and eternity,” said Carl, as he wound his arms about her neck, and kissed the cheek that nestled close to his.

Nelson and Gartha had strayed down to the gate, where they lingered a while, then took the path that led to the river. It was still early twilight when they started for their walk, faint rays of crimson, violets and russet-gold lingered in the western sky. The robins and brown thrush gladdened their mates, with the sweet melody of their evening song. Through the tree branches they now and then caught sight of the sparkling water, the sail boats, and small yachts which glided up and down its rippled surface. While up from the bottom-lands, blowing soft and cool, came the fragrant June winds, as they paced arm in



arm, along the roadway, filled with the scent of wild flowers. Not as lovers, but as friends, that exalted friendship which can only exist between exalted natures. Nelson unburdened his heart to her, and told her of his love for Carrie Van Court.

“At first,” he began, “when I found myself thinking of her, I scoffed at the idea that I should ever be silly enough to allow myself to fall in love with any woman, until I had made both name and fame, and had at least sufficient income to keep a wife in comfort. But as the days went by and I saw her warm-hearted, impulsive nature, her girlish beauty unfold to a more mature womanhood, my love for her grew stronger and stronger, until now it almost maddens me to think of her going to marry a man who has no love for her, but a passion for another woman; this woman is related to Carst through her husband. If Carrie marries Laurence Carst, I shall go to Europe for a year or two, and spend it in studying the great Masters of Italy and France; in that way I hope to forget her. He who rules our destinies takes a strange course if His hand is in this; for with the expectation and hope of some day gaining her for a wife, what would I not strive for, what would I not work for!”

Gartha stood still and laid her hand gently on his arm. “My dear Nelson,” she said, raising her clear eyes to his with compassion, “if we cannot prevent this unfortunate and unholy marriage; if we have no power to save our lovely and lovable Carrie; if she

will not save herself from the saddest and most wretched fate that can befall a woman, that of marrying one man, while her heart is another's, let it not dim your enthusiasm, your ambition to succeed in your art. Turn to your work with all the more determination to gain a name, and attain to eminence in your profession. Do not pander to existing false conditions of things, let the world see you are a master, form its taste, do not let it form yours. It is willing enough to be taught, willing enough to follow a leader, let him be false or true. Dear Nelson, go back to your work, pursue it with all the more diligence, and believe me you will find consolation in it for a wounded heart. Perhaps, like Wilhelm Meister, it is but the beginning of your apprenticeship."

"Oh, Gartha, how you help and aid me with your better council; and may I ever be worthy of it," he said, raising her hand to his lips and reverently kissing it.

"See yonder," she exclaimed, standing still and pointing towards the west. Nelson forgot his troubles; the artist was predominant in him.

"I declare it's fine," he cried with delight, as he drank in the beauty of a crescent moon, looking like a bow of reddish gold tipped on the edge of a long series of curdy clouds, as it sank in the west, its faint light falling on the water, whose ripples tossed it back again, until it seemed like hundreds of gems, shining out of the deep shadows. And streaking with argent softness the white sails that glided up



and down like spirits which had come to earth to revel for a while in the sensuous night.

They were on their way home, when a young man came walking towards them. "A glorious night," was his salute to Nelson, as he passed them, holding a lighted cigar in his hand.

"That was Arthur Lowell, the young professor who is at the head of the great Fine Art Academy, and considered one of the handsomest young men in the City. He tried for a long time to make a success as an artist, but he failed. He is highly connected, and was sent to Europe by a near relative who is rich; he studied there four years; but can't paint worth a cent. When he returned to his own country and City, the gentlemen who built the Academy of Design, and gave it to the City, placed him at the head of it, and it has flourished ever since. He seems at last to have found his true vocation."

"His executive ability being higher than his artistic," said Gartha.

When they reached home Carl had gone and Mary had retired. Gartha went to her own room, the windows opened onto the upper porch, she stepped out and stood a moment gazing at the night, the moon had gone down, and the purple dome above her was a wealth of glimmering stars, and all about her was shifting lights and shadows.

"I wonder if this Arthur Lowell is the young man I met a few weeks ago at the Academy," she said to herself. "He was so polite and attentive. He took

pains to explain to me something about most of the prominent paintings there. Ah, me, have I, too, a destiny, a fate?" She murmured aloud, and going in, she closed the shutters of the windows about her.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SOCIETY AT THE VAN COURTS.

IT was the last day in June, society had separated and parcelled itself off, as it were, some had gone up the Mississippi to the Northern Lakes, others to White Sulphur Springs, and a few to the Eastern watering places. Mrs. Calwald had flown to her Cottage at Long Branch, Mrs. Barton Hamstead had gone to Europe, to visit her 'two daughters whom she had left near the French Capital at school. The lovely Mrs. General Camden had started early for her Cottage in the Berkshire hills, Freddy Faboult and young Henderson had not returned from abroad since the summer before they had left college, but the reader will meet them all in due time. The part of society that remained, thought what a bore it was, what a sacrifice to personal comfort, to have to wait in the hot, stifling city for the eighteenth birthday, the coming out of the only daughter and heiress of Judge Van Court. "How stupid," remarked society, "to have this affair take place in the heat of summer; why not wait until late in the fall, when everybody is at home." But my dear society, Judge Van Court is a gentleman, one of the old régime; he would not take his daughter to the springs until she had made her début

in the social world, and she could not make her *début* until she was eighteen, the proper age, according to the Judge's thinking.

The Van Court mansion and the Van Court grounds are ablaze with light and music; music from the band, from stringed instruments, from the rustle of silks and satins, the pitter-patter of many feet in the dancing tent, as they keep time to the swelling notes of Strauss that float out on the gentle south winds, in soft sensuous strains. There is light from hundreds of lanterns, that hang on the trees; light from flashing gems on white arms and bosoms; from beautiful eyes that burn and glow with human passions, joy, love, jealousy and hate.

Carrie stands beside her father, radiant in a cloud of white, a fillet of diamonds banding her raven hair; gems fasten the filmy gauze on her bosom; they glisten on her arms, and loop up and flame out here and there, from the soft drapery of her dress. A faint flush like that of the peach is on her cheek, and her eyes, dark and deep as night, look upon the gay scene with all the gladness and hope of youth. Mrs. Van Court is seated in an easy chair beside her daughter; she is dressed in gray satin and point lace. There are jewels at her throat, and on her arms, and they gleam and scintillate from the comb which fastens the coils of her brown hair. The throng brings animation to her delicate features, color to her pale cheeks, and brightness to her dim eyes, which twitch all the more nervously as she tries to receive her guests with composure. Laurence Carst stands



to the left of Mrs. Van Court, his evening dress fits to perfection his slight, elegant figure, looking as if moulded to his person. His face is flushed with wine, his long aristocratic nose, the thin yet sensual lips, the gleaming white teeth, and the cold, blue eyes, that gaze on the throng with a sinister expression, tell of the man of the world, and his ambition to stand out as a leader of the throng, although he did not believe in it, he saw only the lower and grosser part of it, he pandered to this phase of it, it pandered to him, and he gave back only that which he was capable of receiving.

To his right stands Madame Bogardus. Madame is never to be found far away from Laurence in any gathering of their social set. She is clad in a robe of rich, creamy satin embroidered in gold, which reveals every line of her superb body, from the voluptuous swell of her bosom, where rubies nestle, sending out their red light, as from hills of snow, down to the undulating curves of her limbs, where it sweeps away on the floor in yards of costly lace. Rubies encircle her neck, her magnificent arms, and bind the coils of her yellow hair. Madame has pearls in her mouth, not that she ever dropped pearls of thought from that mouth for it is a full red-lipped sensual mouth, with no upward curves, but drawn down at the corners. Madame's pearls match the tints of her hair and skin, but her eyes, as she waves her perfumed point lace fan, what shall I say of them? They are large, yellowish-gray orbs, something like those of a Maltese Tom cat, and like Tom, when wishing to

fascinate her prey, she would veil them with their long white lashes, until they melted with wistful tenderness. Yet they are the kind of eyes that can express the cold white heat of passion, hate and revenge. Madame's movements are as soft and stealthy as her prototype, the cat. She purred with her voice, she purred with the touch of her velvet hand; yet those velvet hands had sharp nails, and those eyes could be as cruel to hunt and watch, as the animal's they resembled.

Madame was the wife of General Bogardus, who was a distant cousin of Carst's; he was some twenty years older than she, and she was at this time in the mature beauty of thirty years, when a woman, and beautiful at that, is most dangerous to men. The General, when he married her, was supposed to be very rich, but society which knew and winked knowingly, for society will wink at things, although society has a certain code of honor, too, and seldom deserts a follower, providing he or she keeps within its demands, but fail to do so, and society will take its dainty foot and send him or her hurling down hill, just where he or she belongs. Society knew that the General was not rich; yet Madame was a leader in the most fashionable and aristocratic circles; her balls and receptions, given at the old house, with its spacious grounds, its wings, turrets, and towers, were the gayest and most brilliant; her dresses the richest; her gems the rarest, and her carriage and livery, all in the style society required. The General gave her his name, which was a fine old family one,



the best in the state; he went his way, and she went hers; good wine and good dinners were what the General cared most for. He accompanied his wife now and then to balls, receptions, the theatre and opera. At receptions and balls he was mostly to be found with the men who sneak off to the smoking-room, which is set apart for them in all rich and fashionable houses, where they drink, smoke and play cards, to their heart's content.

"Miss Van Court's début is quite a brilliant affair after all," purred Madame in Carst's ear. "I thought the gathering would be rather slim, so many have left the city."

Laurence never glanced with such tenderness into the eyes of his fiancée as he did into those of Madame's and replied, stroking his nut-brown mustache: "No assemblage could help being brilliant that Madame Bogardus graced."

"How proud you should be to have the keeping of a young heart that has never known a love, but the pure and unsullied one she gives to you," Madame's eyes were never more luring, as she whispered this in Carst's ear and placed her arm in his and pretended to take no notice of her mouse. (Cats never pretend to watch their prey.)

The Lawrie family all received special invitations, but none came but Mary, Nelson and Gartha. Carrie's heart gave a great bound when she saw Nelson enter the drawing-room with the two girls leaning on his arm. The Judge received them with marked courtesy, and Mrs. Van Court was gracious and con-

descending; yet she had a sort of vague wonder how that really beautiful girl, Gartha, came to live with those very peculiar people. And the plain looking one she thought must be Mary Lawrie; well, really, she had also an attraction of her own, which she could not account for, excepting on the ground that she was so very odd looking. Mary wore a pale blue silk, her brown hair combed back in plain bands, her eye glasses resting on the tip of her slightly projecting nose. Gartha's robe was of some soft clinging, shimmering, satiny stuff, the color a delicate peach bloom, like the tinge on her cheek. A bunch of violets nestled at the throat of the high fitting bodice, and her whole *ensemble* was that of a symphony of blending tints and hues. Her quiet, *distingué* appearance attracted all eyes to her, and society asked who that beautiful and queenly looking girl was. But when society learned that her place in life was as yet an obscure one, society shrugged its shoulder and went on with its dancing.

Often during the evening Carrie found herself comparing Nelson Lawrie and Carst, as she saw them several times standing side by side. She never dreamed that every movement she made was watched, that the blood which mounted to her cheek, the something in her large lustrous eyes, which told of her delight when they sought those of Nelson's, a delight that no girl can hide, and comes from the very fact that she is a girl, with nothing to conceal; was all marked down in Madame Bogardus' mental note book.



Still Madame smarts under the admiring glances Carst gives the tall beauty, who came with the Lawries, she already hates the tall beauty; Gartha's clear eyes gaze too straight into hers, their light is too pure, it makes her yellow orbs contract. However, Madame Bogardus is perfect mistress of herself, she is a woman of the world, from the top of her yellow crowned head, to the toe of her white satin slipper. So far as the world's tactics and intrigues are concerned, she is equal to a De Pompadour, for like her, she, too, has a kingdom to lose, a kingdom that must be kept propped up by the best of generalship. Madame is also interested in that fine young man, an artist, she hears. "Dear me," she murmurs to herself, "how came he here? In these days one seldom meets artists in the great moneyed circles of society in America; they have no time for art, or artists, science or scientists, literature or *littérateurs*, or clever people in general."

But Judge Van Court was not of the *nouveauroche*; he belonged to the old régime. Yes, Madame admires all such fine, handsome young fellows, especially if they have anything out of the common about them. She will make herself pleasing to him, so she will have a better opportunity to watch her mouse. My dear Madame, you may use all your wiles to fascinate that fine young fellow, but it will avail you nothing; Nelson would like to paint your hair, your neck, your soft swelling bosom and your magnificent arms, but here in this blaze of light, they are decidedly too bare to please him. Still Madame is a

general in that respect also, she can stand any amount of shot and shell, from the bold eyes of the men about her.

“My dear Clara, how well and bright you are looking,” said little Mrs. Topping, who had just entered. Little Topping’s reddish hair was powdered with gold dust, her sallow cheeks had just the faintest touch of carmine. She had changed her mourning for the occasion; she had worn it over a year and a half, and felt that she had done strict justice to the memory of Felix. This was the coming out in society of her friend’s daughter, she must go, and of course she could not wear black, but a robe of rich mauve satin, covered with white crape, which fell in loose folds from the neck, where it was gathered in like an infant’s waist, to the floor. The short baby sleeves were looped up on the shoulders with a jewel, resting on a lily, we presume to represent a dewdrop; jewels sparkled on her neck and arms.

“Really, Clara, you look ten years younger to-night. I am so pleased you picked yourself up and came down, this will do you good, put new life into your bones; there is nothing like a little excitement once in a while, to lift one out of one’s self. Now a gathering like this, how inspiring it is, to be sure.”

Little Topping waved her fan, and snapped her small reddish brown eyes at the ceiling. “I knew you would rouse yourself, for the Judge’s sake, anyway,” she went on, “you’re not so much to be pitied after all, Clara, if you are weak; he is so strong and you have him to lean on; yes, you have, Clara, his love and



care. When I see the Judge, he reminds me of my own dear husband, who was snatched away in his prime, and who in all the years of our wedded life, never spoke a harsher word to me than, 'My dear, precious Jane.' So you see, Clara, you have much to be thankful for if you are weak." Little Topping did not observe the twitching of Clara's eye-lids, or the continual tapping of her fan against the arm of her chair, as she rattled on like a chirping sparrow.

"I'm so pleased to see Clara down stairs," she said, turning to the Judge, and laying her tiny gloved hand caressingly on his coat sleeve, while she gazed up in his face, with a smile, she thought bewitching, whether the Judge thought so or not, must be left to the reader to conjecture. I do know this it displayed a full set of false teeth. "You must be very proud of your daughter, my dear Judge, she grows more lovely every day, she will be all the rage at the Springs; she will be a new sensation, a bright and joyous thing, that will break all the gentlemen's hearts. She will now begin to taste the pleasures of society. Is it not apparent to you that our people of the upper class have since our more frequent contact with the Europeans, become more cultivated; shaken off the provincial, as it were. I make it a rule, my dear Judge, to go abroad every year or two at least; you know my weakness for pretty things. I am such a lover of the beautiful, and especially of the fine arts. Now, let me whisper something in your ear, my dear Judge," the Judge's ear was considerable distance from Mrs. Topping's, but the Judge

always courteous to the fair sex, bent down so that her lips touched the tips of his ear, and they informed him, in a low whisper, that she had brought the beautiful costume she wore from Paris. "And now, my dear Judge, leaving Carrie's out, don't you think it the loveliest, most original, and artistic costume worn here tonight?" Topping's eyes snapped and danced as she gave a quick jerky motion to her fan.

"My dear madame, I have no experience in regard to ladies' dresses. I can only judge from the effect, and I must say the effect is charming, and let me add that it makes you look younger by twenty years," said the Judge, who was not without the masculine weakness of supposing that to tell a woman who is a widow of uncertain age, that she looks ten or twenty years younger than she really is, is the highest compliment a man can pay her.

The band had ceased playing in the dancing tent, many of the guests were promenading the walks, others were seated under the great oaks, and some had been attracted to the library by the sound of the piano. The Judge had persuaded Mary to play a symphony. Carrie stands by her side, she is to sing an aria, Nelson stood to the left of his sister, and Gartha had seated herself near a window. Carst leaned against an open door, which led out to the hall, from where he stood he could see every movement of Carrie and Nelson. Madame had dropped a small grain or two of her poison of jealousy and suspicion in his ear; the little seed was hardly perceived by him at first; yet it had taken root. The



soil upon which it fell was congenial, and it will spread and grow as all bad seeds do. Carst did not love Carrie Van Court, he did not love anything but himself, and his vices. But Carrie was his fiancée, his wife to be, and it was in every sense gratifying to his ambition, and no other man should snatch her from him. There was no banging or thrumming in Mary's playing, as the long slim fingers swept over the keys, and touched each vibrating note, making exquisite harmony. When she finished there was much applause and a desire to have her repeat it, but Mary, with a pale face, shook her head, and began the accompaniment to Carrie's aria from Norma. And never in the recollection of Mary, Gartha and Nelson, and of all who ever heard her voice before, did she sing as she did on this night. With what deep, pathetic strains, she poured out all the pent-up passion of that first sweet love of her heart, in that famous love song, "Hear Me, Norma." Up, up, clear as a bell, floated the silvery trills, higher, higher, they resounded through the air, and came echoing back in the whispering of the forest trees. It was to Nelson, who alone understood it, an appeal for pity.

"How happy I am to meet you, Miss Lawrie," said Topping, giving the tips of her gloved fingers to Mary. "The piece you just now played, ah, how inspiring it was, to be sure; so finely executed, so much feeling, really delightful. And Carrie, I have never heard her sing so well as she did to-night. You ought to be very proud of your pupil; do you know I really

envy Carrie; I consider her so fortunate, to be thrown while still so young, in the society of such dear, delightful people, such as musicians and artists." Here she snapped her eyes at Nelson, who stood by his sister's chair. "If I had Carrie's opportunities when I was her age, how much more lofty and soaring my life would have been; it would have lifted me out of the commonplace and trivial things of our everyday existence, and made my soul rejoice in the atmosphere of culture. But you know, my dear Miss Lawrie, it has only been in the last few years that girls thought it necessary to play like professionals. Ah," she continued, turning to Nelson, with a toss of her head and a snap of her little eyes, "before I spent so much time abroad, I was just like most of the general run of women, of my place and position. You know, dear, there is so little to be seen in this country that is really artistic. When I was in Paris, and at Rome last, I spent most of my time in visiting the studios of the celebrated artists. I would spend hours every day with them. Do tell me, Mr. Lawrie," and the small white gloved hand was laid softly on his arm, "didn't you draw great inspiration from the paintings you saw in Europe? You returned home with your mind full of their beauties, and of course with aspirations to rival Le—Le—onard; what is that great master's name?"

"Leonardo da Vinci, I think, must be the artist you refer to," said Nelson, bowing with a smile, yet writhing all over to get away.

"Oh, yes, to rival that great Master?"



"Madame," replied Nelson, bored beyond endurance, "an artist can always draw inspiration from nature, and he has that continually before him, and around him, in some shape or other."

"Dear, I am very thirsty, let us go into the air," and she placed her arm in his, and marched him off to the refreshment tent.

Mary held her fan to her face to hide her smiles, and it was evident from the twinkle under the drooping lashes that Topping's gush afforded her no little amusement.

"The horrid thing!" cried Carrie, stamping her foot on the floor, "she has carried Nelson off and will stick to him like a leech all evening. I shouldn't mind," she whispered to Mary, "if she gave him a commission to paint her a thousand dollar painting; but she won't, she hasn't a decent painting in her house, it is filled with the tawdriest, cheapest stuff imaginable. Our house is bare enough, the dear knows, but the few pictures we have possess the merit of not pretending to be anything but what they are. I do hope Nelson will soon get rid of her," and Carrie patted the floor vigorously with her white satin slipper.

"He will, I assure you, and that very soon, in a way that will not offend," returned Mary, who had perfect confidence in her brother's tact.

The band struck up a waltz which brought the guests to the dancing tent, Carrie floated away with Carst, Madame for the last hour had been coquetting in her soft purring way with an influential politician.

Madame would flirt, she could no more live without admiration than she could without her cup of black coffee and burnt brandy, that her maid brought her every morning before rising. Once or twice Madame while engaged in this little pastime of hers caught the eye of Carst, he was standing not far from where she was seated. His face, as he turned it now and then away from the gentleman he was conversing with, was flushed, perhaps from too much wine, but his glance, as he directed it upon her, had a steel-like fire, that boded no good to Madame. She winced under it, these glances were not rare lately; yet she knew the man, and his weak points thoroughly, knew her own power over him, how much at this time he was her slave, and how easily she could appease him in his jealousy.

“Don’t forget yourself, dear,” she would say, with a pressure of her white velvety hand, as she held his, “don’t be silly, Laurence, I am working for you, you shall go to Congress when your last year in the Legislature is up; then it will not be long until you are in the United States Senate.”

The music ceased in the dancing tent. Carrie excused herself, on the plea that her mother had gone to her room, and she must go and see if all were well with her. On her way to the house, she met Charlotte, her mother’s colored maid, who informed her that her “Mistiss was all safe, tucked up in bed. An’ fo’ honey to go an’ ’joy hersef all she could.”

As Carrie walked towards the back porch, she met Nelson. “I am so glad you so soon got rid of Top-



ping," she said, slipping her arm in his, and they strolled down among the trees to the lower part of the grove, which was nearly a quarter of a mile from the house. Nelson wound a light shawl she had brought with her about her shoulders. She was glad to escape from the crowd, glad to be alone with him, for never since the first vague impression stole over her of her love for him, did she feel its strength as she did on this night. All through the evening she found herself comparing the two men, and once as they stood side by side, one her lover, the other her betrothed, what a difference, she thought. What a contrast in the two men! Nelson, tall and erect with a manly bearing, his fine head, with its sweep of dark brown hair, the large gray-blue eyes, deep and penetrating, yet with an expression at times as soft as a dream. He looked upon the gay assemblage, and studied it for his pencil, that he might better portray on canvas the graceful, moving forms of men and women, that which gives glow to the cheek and light to the eyes; the mirror through which we get a glimpse of the heart that beats and throbs with human emotions. All making a combination of life, soul and spirit, the incomprehensible masterpiece of the Creator.

Carrie and Nelson had wandered down as far as the small gate, that opened to the road at the end of the grove, where they passed out, and soon found themselves in the path which led to the river. They strayed on, forgetful of all else but each other; they were alone with the silence of the night around them; she

was his, all his for a little while at least. On the morrow she would be gone, gone from him forever. He had never seen her look so beautiful, so radiant, as she did in the midst of the evening's splendor, in all the light, warmth, color and music. It made his love for her still more hopeless of attainment, and at every step he felt himself going to break out into a frenzy of passionate pleading, to leave all and fly with him; but a face would rise before him, with its clear eyes gazing into his, a sweet, womanly face, whose owner in the same pathway, a few evenings before, had begged him to be strong, and not to let his love for Carrie master him, to commit any rash act; but turn to his work for consolation.

"When do you leave for the Springs?" he asked, trying hard to control the trembling of his deep, barytone voice.

"As soon as mamma has rested sufficiently to leave," she answered, drawing closer to him. "We did intend to go in the morning, but papa thinks the excitement of to-night will unfit her for the journey for at least a few days."

They had turned their steps homeward, and were emerging from the path into the grove again, when Nelson stopped. "Tell me," he said, standing a little apart from her, while his eyes gazed steadily into hers, as if they would search her soul, "do you intend to marry Laurence Carst?"

She hesitated a moment. "I—I—," and the short upper lip was drawn down firmly over the shut teeth, "I—do," but the words were scarcely audible; then,



after a moment's pause, she became more softened, and added: "I see no way out of it, dear Nelson, unless you can plead with papa to look on our union favorably. But I know him so well, he will never consent to our marriage. He has set his heart upon my being Laurence Carst's wife; he thinks he sees in him great things in the future, besides my father always held a tender regard for his mother, all through her life, until she died. I do not love him; I do not even admire him. I told my father so, but he will not listen; he thinks it but a girlish whim. I must bid you farewell to-night, Nelson dear, farewell, farewell, my love, my beloved, farewell." She flung her white arms, gleaming with jewels about his neck, and laid her soft cheek against his. He kissed her again and again, on mouth and brow. "Farewell, farewell," she cried, tearing herself from his embrace.

"Stay, Carrie, stay," he begged, taking hold of both her hands. "If you love me, if you value your own happiness and mine, give up this hateful marriage, throw off this golden yoke, and trust yourself to me. I have no wealth to offer you, but I have youth, strength and manhood; I promise my love will shield, protect and cherish you, until my dying day. Yes, Carrie, this hand will ever be ready to ward off the rude and disagreeable part of life; no thorn will grow upon your path, but I shall pluck them up from the roots; with your love as an incentive to urge me on, my genius will win me fame and riches, and a name you will be far prouder of than Laurence Carst's."

"Oh, Nelson, do not drive me mad; there is no sac-

rifice I would not make for you, if left to my own will, but there is mamma and papa, and my duty towards them. Dear Nelson, while my road now leads away from you, still something tells me to hope that the future may be ours ; hope, dear Nelson, hope for this."

Her shawl had slipped from her shoulders, and she stood with her head thrown back, the fillet of gems that clasped her brow glistened like stars against the purple black of her hair ; her bare arms were raised, the large dark eyes burned like coals of fire ; the broad heavens with its bright planets shone above them ; all was silent about them, save the song of the katy-dids and the gentle southing of the trees which whispered to her unheeded better things.

"Farewell, farewell, Nelson, my love," she cried, wringing her hands in the air. He stretched out his arms to take her again to his breast, but she was gone, and he stood alone watching her white draped figure glide through the trees.



## CHAPTER IX.

### MADAME BOGARDUS MEDITATES.

AFTER the ball, Madame Bogardus sat in her satin-hung boudoir, meditating on things to be, and not to be. The General had gone to bed, or rather, he had been put to bed,—this putting to bed had become chronic with the General. Madame had not yet rang for her maid, she would dispense with her maid to-night. Madame's yellow orbs are not so soft and melting as an hour ago, when she leaned on the arm of Carst, resplendent in her rubies, shimmering satin and lace. Oh, no, they glare and flash now, with a horrid white light; and her velvety hands, how they clutch at the costly lace of her rich robe! "Bah, what a loveless marriage it will be." Madame does not purr this, but rather hisses it from between her pearls, as she rises and goes to the mirror, and stands before it. She takes the rubies from her bosom and hair, unfastens its coils, and lets it fall down her neck in a shining mass, then rolls it up again in a loose knot at the back of her neck, crosses the floor, throws herself into a chair, and continues to meditate. "Marriage convenience, we practice but little in this country; well, I cannot prevent it, it suits his purpose and so long as it does, I must make it suit mine. But let

him dare draw the reins after the ceremony, and I shall make him feel my power. He does not love her, she is just young enough and good enough to be detestable; after she and Carst are married, I shall work to bring her and that fine young fellow together. Bah, didn't I see him and her steal off together to-night, so much in my favor."

How Madame's yellow orbs glare, and the white hands work as if they would like to tear at the poor mouse's throat. Madame rises and rings for her maid, she has changed her mind, the packing of her trunks must be attended to, she will also leave for the Springs in a few days.



## CHAPTER X.

### JUDGE VAN COURT VERSUS NELSON LAWRIE

THE next morning, when the Lawrie family met at breakfast, there was none of the light bantering which the family so delighted in, and which Mary anticipated this morning with her brother and Gartha. When Nelson made his appearance in the dining-room he was not in his usual working dress, but the reverse; his toilet showing that he had taken the most scrupulous pains with it. He looked very pale, and dark circles hollowed his eyes; he had not spent in rest the few remaining hours which were left for sleep, when he left the Van Courts, but rather in a fierce battle for mastery over his love, which had taken such a hold on him during the last two or three months. He made no comments on the Van Court reception, but drank his coffee without a word. Mary and Gartha, guessing his trouble, showed their sympathy in silence.

Peter kept up a great query in his own mind; he wondered what in the "eternal" had happened, after all the fuss and hubbub, the young folks had made in preparing for Carrie's party; even Susan got a little "luney" on the subject and acted more like a woman of thirty than one nearing the sixties. And now on

this morning when he expected to hear all about how the thing came off, and about the swell people that were there, the whole three of them were struck apparently dumb.

"Wal, jist so, thar was no accounting for the whims of young folks." These were Peter's thoughts, but he did not venture to express them, for Peter did like a little harmless gossip, especially when it came seasoned and spiced in an original way, which it was sure to from the girls and Nelson.

"The coffee isn't so clear this morning, Nelson, dear. I fear a few grounds have gotten into your cup," said Mrs. Lawrie, looking at her son and wishing he would say something.

"It was never better, mother, and went just to the spot, I feel quite refreshed after it," he replied, rising and leaving the table and the dining-room.

In less than a quarter of an hour Nelson Lawrie had rung the bell at the front door of the Van Court mansion. It was answered by Frank, the house steward. "Walk in, sah, de Jedge hab jes finished his breakfast, an' is in de library, readin' de monin' papa, walk in, sah." And Frank, with all the politeness of a French Chevalier, ushered Nelson into the library. The Judge, who was seated near one of the richly draped windows, reading, looked up and greeted him cordially, and asked him to be seated. Nelson did not take the proffered chair, but stepped a few paces forward with hat in hand, and stood near a marble-topped center table.

"It is somewhat early in the morning to call," he



began, giving a slight twist to his mustache, "but not knowing the exact time you left home for your office, I thought I would make sure to find you. And as I have every reason to believe my errand is a hopeless one, I think the quicker I make it known, the better for us both," said Nelson, looking straight at the Judge.

"What in thunder is the fellow trying to come at?" thought the Judge to himself, as he laid the newspaper across his lap, his bright black eyes snapping as he returned Nelson's gaze.

"My errand," continued Nelson, "is to inform you that I love your daughter, and have come to ask you for her hand, and your consent to our marriage."

"To ask for the hand of my daughter in marriage; what do you mean, are you mad, sir?" said the Judge, rising from his seat; he let the newspaper drop from his hand, while his eyes flashed with surprise and indignation. The Judge, treating a young man like Nelson Lawrie with courtesy and consideration was an entirely different matter from giving him his only daughter in marriage. "Has my daughter any knowledge of this?" he asked, beginning to pace up and down the library floor; then stopping his pace, he stood beside the mantelpiece.

"She has," flashed back Nelson's gray blue eyes, as he stood erect, but somewhat pale.

"Am I to understand that you and yours have taken advantage of my child's youth and innocence of the world, in going to and from your house for music lessons?"

“My sister has been zealous in her duty towards Miss Van Court, and in her coming to and going from our home, my mother has ever shown her the kindest attention and affection. She liked to come to our home, and she found it both pleasant and instructive; and the result is we are in love with each other.”

“Are you aware, sir,” said the Judge, bringing all his dignity and imperiousness to bear upon Nelson, “that my daughter’s hand is already promised to a gentleman, her equal in family, wealth and social position; besides a representative of his state in the Legislature; are you aware of that, sir?”

Nelson’s coolness matched the Judge’s dignity; there was something of his mother in him, as he replied: “I am aware that you have promised Miss Van Court’s hand to Laurence Carst, and that he is rich, and that is everything, even to those who pretend to look upon family and blood as all important, and consider mere money vulgar. Miss Van Court has never been consulted in regard to her affection for her cousin, nor has she ever told you, her father, she loved him.”

This exasperated the Judge. “You are impertinent, sir,” he cried, drawing down his upper lip, which gave his mouth an expression of hardness; “yes, sir, you are, I repeat, impertinent. Who are you, and what are you, to have the presumption to come here and propose for the hand of my daughter?”

Nelson never moved from the position he had taken near the table when he first entered the library, but at the last words of the Judge there passed over his



face a deep burning flush, that dyed his cheek and neck scarlet, leaving it after it faded away paler than before.

"I am a man, and have the same claim to be considered a gentleman that any of my countrymen have; we have different ideas as to what constitutes a gentleman, what the world accepts as a gentleman is another thing. The word has many definitions, every nation having its own code of ethics, in regard to it. Still there is but one definition for the true man and gentleman, and I will leave that to you. And as to my calling it is that of an artist.

"If you think that a poor, unknown young man like you, a mere artist, is a fit suitor for the only daughter and heiress of Howard William Van Court, you are most damnably mistaken, sir," cried the Judge, commencing to stride up and down the floor again, almost beside himself with anger, at Nelson's coolness, but taking it for downright insolence.

"I prefer being an artist to being rich and an unprincipled politician," said Nelson.

"Damn politics, I hate politics myself, but there is a great stretch between a mere politician and a man who represents his country in the United States Senate, a statesman, sir."

"Artists have played at being statesmen, but statesmen cannot play at being artists. Cardinals, Popes and Kings, have been known to uncover in the presence of artists, and their work; but there is no record where they have done so in the presence of statesmen. I see that my mission is a hopeless one, that being a

gentleman, with youth, talent and strong manhood, the devotion of a life, which I offer to your daughter whom I love with all my soul, counts for nothing; good morning, sir."

"Stay a moment," commanded the Judge, as Nelson turned to leave. "I shall forbid my daughter going to your house, and from this day, seeing or speaking to any of its inmates, on the penalty of disinheritance; and if she disobeys me I shall make Laurence Carst my heir."

"Good morning, sir," said Nelson, leaving the room, and opening the hall door, he ran down the steps, glad to get into the fresh air. But in recalling the scene of that morning in after years, he never knew how he did get out of the house, nor to his own home.

"I call that fellow the essence of impudence, downright insolence," said the Judge to himself, as he heard the hall door shut after Nelson. "Lord, sir, every clod-hopper considers himself a gentleman in these days; every trade is a profession, and every mechanic is an artist. That is the fault of the times, the hurrying, burrying times; the pushing, elbowing, vulgar mob; the tendency to 'I am as good as you, sir,' " and the Judge stopped in his strides up and down the floor, before the bell and gave it a quick, vigorous pull, that brought Frank. "Yes, sah," said Frank, as he put his head half-way in the door. "Has Miss Carrie breakfasted yet?" asked the Judge.

"She habn't quite finished yet, sah."

"Tell your young mistress her father wishes to see her in the library, when she has breakfasted."



"Yes, sah," answered the black head, as it disappeared.

We fear the fault with the Judge, as well as with a good many others, is that he did not always recognize the gentleman when he met him.

In a few moments Carrie entered the library; her thin white morning robe added interest to her face, which the pain at parting with her lover the night before, and the loss of sleep, which followed, had stripped of some of its rich olive bloom, leaving it pale and worn.

"Good morning, papa," she said, advancing to the middle of the floor.

"Stand there," said her father, with a sternness of manner she had never before seen him evince towards her, "has that impertinent fellow Lawrie been making love to you?"

"Oh, papa," pleaded Carrie, folding her hands before her, her great soft eyes resting on her father's face with an imploring gaze, "Nelson Lawrie would not nor could not be impertinent to you. He has the best of manners, and if he were not in love with me, you would think him a splendid young gentleman."

"Fiddle, dee, dee," cried the Judge, or rather sang it, with a sort of whistle, "then this fellow has been making love to you. Has he asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes."

"Have you promised to marry him?"

"Not without your consent; that is what brought him here this morning, to obtain it," she answered,

the film gathering in her eyes and almost blinding her.

“My daughter,” the Judge began, with the same hardening of the mouth, as when speaking to Nelson, “I forbid you having anything further to say to this young Lawrie; I forbid you going to his house, or having any communication with his family; from now until after your marriage with your cousin. If you are undutiful and throw yourself away on a man who can hardly give you bread to eat; if you disregard my plans, the hopes and ambitions I have had for your future, so that you may fill a place of the highest distinction in the world where you belong, as my daughter and heiress. If you want to throw these aside and marry this Lawrie, this nobody; if you care nothing for a father’s love and affection,” the Judge’s lip quivered as he looked at Carrie, who was standing with her hands locked before her, her face white as her dress, her large eyes moist with tears that were appealing to him for pity, “I shall disown you, never allow your mother to see or speak to you, and will make Laurence Carst my heir.”

Carrie turned her back and stepped a few paces to the door; always the image of her father, but what was masculine in him, had been moulded to feminine softness in her; she turned around again and took a pace or two towards him. All the moisture had left her eyes, they were dry and very bright, and the upper lip, so characteristic of the parent, was drawn firmly down over the slightly projecting teeth. “Papa, your love is everything to me,” she said, laying her



hand in her father's. "I owe you implicit obedience; I will marry Laurence Carst." She turned quickly from him and left the library.

"She is her father's daughter, every inch of her," murmured the Judge to himself, as he shook his head, and folded his arms behind his back and renewed his pacing up and down the floor. "She is too sensible to throw herself away on that fellow Lawrie. Pooh! it's only a girlish fancy that will soon wear away. Bah! when she came to taste of poverty, love would soon fly out the window. There is nothing that will kill a romantic love like poverty. Ah me, we have all had our romance in youth," he said aloud, his thoughts carrying him back to the time when he loved his cousin, Laurence Carst's mother. She was engaged to the rich planter Carst, when he first met her; he had just returned from college and a two years' voyage in Europe and fell deeply in love with her. The report was that she returned his love, but her marriage was near at hand, and that ended the matter.

Oh, yes, my dear Judge, we have all had our romance, the man or woman who has passed his or her youth, without experiencing that first early passion, has lost the sweetest, dearest and most joyous part of life. It softens the hard places of our future, and its memory is often the healing balm to the sorrow which is sure to come to all in later years. The Judge stopped his pacing, looked at his watch, then went into the hall, took his hat and cane from the hall rack, left the house and stepped into his carriage that was

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waiting at the door, and was driven to the city and to court. A few days after his interview with Nelson Lawrie, the morning papers announced that Judge Van Court, wife and daughter, accompanied by the Honorable Laurence Carst, and Madame and General Bogardus, had left the city for the White Sulphur Springs.



## CHAPTER XI.

TO PEN ONE WORD THAT WOULD GIVE THEE PAIN,  
WOULD BE LIKE PRICKING THY WOUNDS AFRESH.

It was one of those fearfully hot days, that come thick and fast upon us when July arrives upon her fiery steed, and June, beautiful June, vanishes for another year. Dry, hot, dusty days, that scorch the grass into brownish stubbles, sap the moisture from the trees, flowers and fruit; with no respite save the slight south breeze which rises when the sun goes to sleep.

Nelson was making preparations to go abroad, Mrs. Lawrie was calm and silent; while she all along had an inkling that an affection existed between Carrie and her son, she thought it but a slight attachment which young people are very apt to form for each other when thrown much together, and could easily be broken off at will. "They should have known better, she thought to herself, since the whole truth had come so unexpectedly to her. Carrie, leaving without a word, without even running over to say good-by to Mary and Gartha. Nelson's errand to the Van Courts the morning after the reception, his haggard look; his shutting himself up in his studio for days, afterwards. Then his coming to her and telling her

of his desire to go to Europe to travel for a year or two to study, and how thankful he would be if she would help him ; he had quite a little sum himself laid by, and had a few orders to finish, but he wanted to be sure of enough to carry him through before he left home.

“Why must you go, my son?” she asked, when they were in the studio alone. “I stood it very well the first time you took the journey,” she said with a quiver of the lip and a tenderness in her tone, that but a mother can have for her only son. “I felt then it was my duty to send you, that your profession required that you should study abroad. Your father and I are growing old, London and Paris are far away, and two years is a long while to be gone from home.” She gazed out of the window, her eyes were wet with tears, and her thoughts went back to the sons and daughters she had buried ; and of late the pride and affection she had in her oldest son, had been gradually centering on Nelson. Not that she would acknowledge it to herself, as never was boy born like unto this oldest son, whom she had laid to rest six years before in all the promise of his young manhood.

“You must not take my going so much to heart, my dear, good, beautiful mother,” said Nelson, stooping over and kissing her on the cheek. “You can get along very well without me, so far as being of any help to you. I have never been as yet but an expense. You have father, Mary and Gartha left to love you, and they are the best company, besides you will have



your son thinking of you, and loving you all the more because he is far away from home. A year or two will not be long passing, then I shall return with my mind stored with fresh knowledge and new ideas ready to begin work again. As things are now, my dear mother, it is necessary to my peace of mind that I go away."

Mary grew thinner and paler each day, the bright color that usually tinged her cheeks had faded from them. Mrs. Lawrie thought it was the heat that affected her naturally delicate constitution, and told herself that when the cool weather came she would regain her strength. They made her give up her pupils and music and take herself off to the studio, the "Haven of Rest"; and it was a "Haven of Rest" to her in these hot months, in which she felt always so tired and weary. How she would miss Nelson, she thought, and the times when she would lie quietly with half-closed lids, watching him paint. Peter hung a hammock under the trees for her to rest in mornings and evenings, when she tired of the studio. Peter wanted to know from his wife if there couldn't be money enough spared to send her to the seashore, or some of the upper northern lakes. He informed Mary in a great secret that he had a little purse of his own, hid away, that her mother knew nothing about. It would give her a month or two in a quiet corner of Put-in Bay, if she would only consent to go. Mary took his old face between her two slender palms and kissed him on both cheeks, and said: "You dear old par," in her mimicking way, "I am far better off at

home, with mother and yourself, and those who love me, and there can be no purer or finer air than the air of Tanglewood." Peter had a poor way of showing his affection to his family, and this youngest child and only living daughter had always been a favorite with him; there was a tender spot down deep in his heart, which he kept for her, which none of his other children had ever touched. Perhaps the reason for it was she was more gentle and considerate of his peculiarities, than the others had ever been. He would stand the little sly dabs made in a loving way at his eccentricities, with a better grace from her than from his wife and son.

He told his wife one night after Nelson's contemplated journey abroad was settled, that she was humoring her son in a whim at the expense of his sister's health. "Of course the money is yours; you can do as you please with it, but traveling in Europe like a nabob don't suit poor young men; they should be satisfied with their own country."

"Artists are obliged to go to Europe to study, Peter, you know father, if Nelson has what they call genius, let us give him all the advantages we can," replied Mrs. Lawrie, taking off her spectacles and laying them away in a comfortable corner of her work-basket.

"No, I don't know," retorted Peter, very crossly from under the bedclothes; he was lying with his back to his wife, with the sheets all gathered up about his neck. "As for myself, I am a plain old republican, an old Yankee, who hates all the fol-de-rol we hear



in these days, about an aristocracy, and a republican court at Washington. This country was never planned on any such principles, our constitution was never formed on any such basis ; our forefathers were good old simple republican men, men strong of purpose and firm of hand, men who had the good of their country at heart ; and the days that followed were good, old, simple, republican days ; when an honest man was honored, no matter how hard or furrowed his hands were with toil."

"Father, you go on terribly when I take flights in the upper regions," said Mrs. Lawrie, biting the corners of her mouth, as she combed out her gray hair which was still long and abundant.

"I don't tower, Susan, no, I leave that for you and the girls and Nelson to do over the beauties of nature, and high art. I mean those were the days when the mechanic, the artisan, the skilled workman and the true workman, of any sort, was respected for what he was as a man ; not like what he is now, with all his trades unions. What has he ? Nothing but what a few men, who want the 'arth, and the heavens, too, choose to give him ; and if they could go down to hell and back, would like to run things thar. Blame me, but they wouldn't find it quite so comfortable down thar. With this power the respect for the individual man has gone."

And Peter turned over on his back, raised himself and sat up in the bed. His eyes were wide open, ready to talk from then until morning, settling the affairs of the nation.

“Well, Peter, these things will right themselves in time. I don’t mind so long as the poor men make a living for their families, what their unions are. Besides, I have heard you say that the workingman was a producer and that he should have his rights, and that capital could do nothing without labor, that labor was capital and capital labor. I am sure I am just as dependent on Arminta out there and her kind, as she is on me; we are all, for that matter, father, dependent on one another,” returned Mrs. Lawrie, putting out the light and nestling down beside her husband.

“Thar it is, agin, it is just like you, Susan, unless you see something to tower over in poetry, music and high art, you don’t care whether the country goes to tarnation or not,” replied Peter, who was very much nettled at the way his wife’s comfortable sides shook the bed from silent laughter.

“Why should I worry about what don’t concern me?” said Mrs. Lawrie, composing herself. “Things that I have no power to help; I have my own family to look after and I have my own cares and trials, which I burden no one with, and try to bear them as patiently as possible.”

“Wal, just so, Susan, but can’t you see the very troubles an’ burdens you mention, comes from the existing conditions in the country, that makes things hard for everybody. An’ yit, mother, everything is so plentiful, everything grows in abundance, we have had no pestilence nor famine; we have had war, but not at home; the war with Spain, from the looks of



things, couldn't be helped, I presume, but the war in the Philippines is the most disgraceful thing that the grand old party ever committed, an' it should be whipped out of the temple for it. Yes, mother, God seems to have smiled upon the land, but the rain will come; His vengeance will pour down upon us. Men study and invent how to make things scarce, such as cold storage an' the like, and they hold the fruits of the 'arth, until all the taste, an' all the nutriment, and health-giving properties are frozen out of them, and they are kept locked up from the people, and the producer can get nothing for his produce."

"Well, now, Peter, lie down and go to sleep. I am very tired," said Mrs. Lawrie.

"Wal, jist so, Susan," and Peter laid back on his pillow with a great "Och." Peter was not a socialist, he was not the kind of man who produces the reformer; he was the very opposite, an old conservative New Englander. A Puritan in every sense, an American and a patriot to the core of his heart; a republican in all that the word means, a democrat, but belonging, as he himself said, to the grand old republican party. Not as it is now, but when it was in its purity and simplicity and advocated thoroughly republican principles.

It was after tea, Mary and Gartha were seated on the front porch. Mary's head leaned against the back of her chair, which Gartha had arranged with pillows and soft cushions; her feet rested on a hassock and her light blue muslin dress with her usual simple trimmings at the neck, such as a soft bit of lace, and

a rare old cameo brooch of her mother's. Gartha was seated near her. I have said that Gartha was beautiful, tall and lithe, and that her features were of the clear cut Grecian type, but after all her beauty came from the inner self, from the soul, the spiritual which dominated her whole nature. Her glorious hair on this evening, it being very sultry, she wore piled high on top of her head, an ivory comb fastening the heavy coils. Her diaphanous robe of white fell about her feet, in deep pleatings edged with lace; there was not a touch of color in the whole ensemble of her attire, excepting the bronze brown of her hair, the tinge on her cheek, and the small inexpensive fan she held in her hand, and which she waved to and fro. No sister could give more attention and affection than she did to the delicate girl seated at her side. To Mary, Gartha was the one ideal woman in the whole world. How congenial and happy they were in each other's society; their mutual love for books and pictures and their appreciation of the same authors; their long conversations in the studio, and under the trees, were a constant delight to Mary.

Carl came during the warm months, nearly every evening to tea; it was he and only he, who for a moment would bring a slight flush to Mary's cheek. He watched her with a heavy, aching heart, and a never-ceasing anxiety.

"My life, my soul!" he would cry, when walking up and down the floor of his studio, and the strong desire came upon him to have her all to himself, to possess her, so that he might watch over her, "but it would



never do, it would not be right to take her away from such gentle and loving care, such fond hearts, to walk the rough road of poverty and privation with me."

The weather was too warm for her to accompany him on the piano, but he would often sit for an hour after tea, in the long summer twilight, playing for Gartha and herself their favorite airs. On this evening he was seated apart from them. "Whisper what thou feelest," was not whispered, but with flushed face, his eyes, raised to the sky, he sent it floating out in long thrills and variations on the soft night winds, that came echoing back over the house tops, through the locust trees, the sighing oaks and soughing pines.

Carl had ceased playing and had laid aside his flute, when Nelson came up the path, and walking by his side, was a young man with the same stately bearing as the one Gartha and Nelson had met that night, some weeks before, when they were walking down by the river. As Nelson presented him to the girls, Gartha recognized him as the young man who paid her such marked attention at the art gallery. He was well known to Carl, who rose and shook the hand politely held out to him; Gartha rose also and went into the sitting-room, to fetch some chairs. When she returned and had seated herself again, Arthur Lowell, the young professor, for it was he, drew his chair close to her side.

From the shoulders of the young professor, down to the toe of his shining boot, there was the symmetry

of the Apollo Belvedere, his head being equal in classic grace to that Greek type of masculine perfection. His hair was a dark, reddish brown, and his heavy curling mustache covered a mouth that to the observer the lines showed a certain hardness and selfishness, where his personal interests were concerned. The teeth were white and regular, and indicated strength; the eyes were a dark brown, large and lustrous, and shaded with long brown lashes. His forehead, nose and chin, seemed perfect in their clear-cut outlines, and their expression of refinement. As he leaned against the back of his chair, in a graceful attitude Gartha thought so far as the embodiment of physical, intellectual and manly beauty was concerned, that nowhere in the wide world was his equal to be found.

“How came he here,” she thought; how came he into her life? She knew he was not what her mother had hoped and wished she might claim as a husband. But she herself had caught a glimpse of such a being, while sitting at her mother’s feet, reading to her in the long winter’s evening; and again conning her lessons in her own room, or under the great forest trees of her home. He addressed her about some trivial thing, the heat of the weather and so forth, and as Gartha raised her eyes to his, she instantly dropped them as the thought flashed across her mind:

“I have met my destiny, my fate,” and the dark lashes, which shaded her cheek, heightened the blush that swept up to her neck and face.



"Yes, the heat has been intense for the last two weeks," she said, looking away from him, and slowly fanning herself.

He continued to address his remarks to her: "Every one who can get away from the City should leave it during the hot months. I, myself, would have flown to cooler quarters long ago, but we are having some repairs made at the Academy that required my attention."

"You are so interested in your work there that it absorbs all your time, at least you prefer to give all your time to the advancement of your school," she replied, and her eyes met his again, and he observed that they were brighter than when they first changed glances, and the light that shone in them was beautiful. Her eyes were her chief charm, one could never tell their color; but whatever her thoughts and feelings were, were expressed in the intensity and depths of their hues.

"Every man must have some vocation; life is nothing without some fixed purpose, and whatever a man's calling may be, he must, if he wishes to succeed, give it his whole time," he answered. "Now I gave up painting, after trying it for seven or eight years, ever since I was a boy, couldn't succeed; knew I couldn't; no man understood the principles of art, technique and the theory of light and shade better than I. I had them at the tip of my tongue; no one could explain them to better advantage, and make them more clear to the student than myself; but I

could not apply them; couldn't succeed as a painter; knew I couldn't."

"Good thing you found it out, old boy," cried Nelson, with a hearty laugh from the upper end of the porch. "You have been saved the pain of being told it with every breath you draw, and you will have the immense satisfaction at the close of your days of not being one of those great artists who never succeeded."

"Some of the greatest painters never succeeded in a worldly sense," replied Gartha, smiling and shaking her fan at Nelson.

"Not in these practical times, which generally measure success by dollars and cents; the world doesn't ask by what means a man gains success, just so he attains it, that is all is necessary, my Gartha."

"I see you are inclined to be cynical to-night; it must be the heat," said Gartha, trying to get some breeze out of the little toy she held in her hand, in the shape of a fan.

"I am not always in sympathy with my brother, but this oppressive heat would try the patience of a better natured man than he," said Mary, from under the shadow of Carl's protecting arm, where she had drawn herself and her chair apart from the others.

"Lawrie has a habit of falling into these moods," responded the professor, twisting the ends of his moustache, with delicate white fingers. "He used to be merciless towards me; he would tell me without a qualm that my portraits of men were characterless, with no more soul than if they were made of putty; that my women were wooden women, whitewashed.



He was kind enough to inform me what my pictures needed, what colors to use and how to apply them, but I knew all that myself as well as he. It was something like the old lady who made the whitest and lightest of home bread. One day her young daughter-in-law, who did not know how to make bread, came to her for the receipt; the old lady said: 'I make it so and so, and when the sponge is ready, I do so and so. I have my oven just so hot, when I put in the bread,' and she explained the process of making and baking it. But when the bread was baked, it was dark, and no brick could be harder. 'Why, I made it just as your mother told me,' said the young wife, when her husband turned a scowling face at the bread. Oh, Lawrie used to handle me without gloves; we seldom agree; he has his way of thinking and I have mine. He believes in genius, I do not. I believe the same results can be reached by study."

"Alas, alas, many a genius has been stranded on the rock of despair, when they have missed early training, and have grown gray in working out their own problems; while mere talent which has had the benefit of every advantage from early childhood up, have stolen their ideas and adapted them to their use, and gained the day, while still young," said Carl, his voice made mellow by the serene influence tobacco has on some natures.

"Ah, you're all mistaken," replied Gartha, thoughtfully. "The genius must go through any amount of mechanical drudgery; he cannot be great without it,

but to him comes the pleasure which is denied those who are merely mechanical; the inspiration to seize and to hold, the poetical and spiritual, that something subtle, which few possess, few have the power to express on canvas or paper. We feel it, but we do not always understand it; besides there is the exquisite pleasure of beholding the creations of one's own brain."

"Genius is genius, and all attempts to define it are simply impossible, it rises above and beyond everything, and is always surprising. It is also self-denying, self-sacrificing; genius will live in an attic on a crust of bread, so as to be able to work out its thoughts, and its problems. It will forsake everything for the love of its work, that it may give to the world what its heart feels, its eyes and brain see. Mere talent does not do this, never has and never will; it looks for quicker results, for money, therefore uses what genius has thought out alone in silence, obscurity and poverty," said Nelson, leaving his chair and stepping down off the porch, with the exclamation: "Gracious, isn't it hot!"

Then Carl came out from the haze that enveloped him: "My life, it is a scorching night," he said, wiping the perspiration from his forehead and beginning to walk up and down on the gravel path, puffing and blowing and fanning himself so vigorously with his broad-brimmed hat that his nose came in for a good rap, with every move of it.

"It has been one of the warmest days of the sea-



son," said the professor, looking as if no heat could penetrate that cool exterior of his.

"Well, if here isn't mother with a pitcher full of ice cool lemonade; what a dear, thoughtful old mother you are," said Nelson, stepping forward and taking the pitcher and a salver full of glasses from her hand.

"I am not so thoughtful as you think, my son; I wanted a cool drink; so while I was about it I made enough for all."

"As if you weren't always thinking of us and our comfort," came from Mary.

"What foolish children, to try and make believe that none of you knew where the lemons, sugar and ice were kept, and welcome to help yourselves at any time," replied Mrs. Lawrie, looking over her spectacles at Arthur Lowell, as if she were ready to mother him, and take him into the fold. Then she disappeared and immediately returned with a silver cake-basket full of delicious golden pound-cake.

"Oh, what a sly mother you are," said Nelson, who had finished helping the others, and was pouring out for himself a glass of the lemonade. "You remember how you reprimanded me this evening when I went for the last piece of cake in the dish. I supposed it the last piece I would see until baking day again."

"My brother's appetite for cake is anything but esthetic; he had two large pieces to-night for tea, then wanted to buy mine. When I refused to sell, he went without ceremony for the last slice in the basket, which is anything but good manners," said Mary, her quiet laugh joining in with Gartha's low ripple.

"I always knew there was a good deal of the cake in him," remarked the professor, sipping his lemonade, and glancing at Mary, glad to get a sly dab at Nelson, whom he felt generally got the better of him in an encounter.

"I own to being somewhat cakey, but I hope not of the spongy sort," retorted Nelson, who was busily eating a slice, and every once in a while leaned over and gave his mother's arm a gentle squeeze, as much as to say, how good it is. "You should see mother's cupboard in the cellar," he went on. "It has a dozen or more immense shelves, and on baking day, when the baking is finished, you should hear the trotting she keeps up from kitchen to cellar, and from cellar to kitchen, each time her arms loaded with good things. I never see what goes into that wonderful store-house; I only know what issues from it. Then, after a few days, I begin to hear mother's old song," (imitating his mother), "Nelson, my son, that is the last of the jelly cake; that is the last of the cup-cake. Nelson, my son, don't eat so much sweets; eat more substantials, and that is the last of the apple and raspberry pie, and the cookies are all gone, and we shall have no more until Saturday again. Of course I desist, but I see no diminishing of the pies and cake. Oh, what a sly mother you are, and I'm sure my sister and Gartha conspire with you to defraud me of my rightful share of confections, which is necessary to every healthy system."

"What a big boy you are, Nelson," said Mrs. Lawrie, shaking in her chair from suppressed laughter.



"Always a boy to you, mother," he said with a sigh, that came in spite of his gayety.

"My life, what one of us would not like to be a boy again," came from Carl. He had taken his chair from the porch onto the gravel walk, where he sat in the loosest, coolest manner, sipping his lemonade.

"Ye gods of all the pagan Greeks! I have at last found her," exclaimed Arthur Lowell, slapping Nelson on the back, when he and Nelson had gotten far enough down the path not to be observed by those sitting on the porch. "I have been searching for her the last five months. It is about that long since I met her in the Art Gallery. She seemed so interested in paintings, and spoke so intelligently about them that I thought I might be likely to find her there any day at about the same hour. About three o'clock every afternoon I generally go to the gallery, for a half hour's rest and quiet, and it was about that time I saw her seated before one of the large paintings in the east room. But she never came again; I have thought of her continually, until I began to feel she was some fancied vision that had taken shape in my brain; or some one of the sculptured Diana's or Psyche's which I'm surrounded with, had clothed herself, in flesh and blood, and came to disturb my peace of mind. But, my dear fellow, I have found her," and he threw his arms around Nelson's neck, and nearly smothered him with a hug.

Nelson, who never knew Arthur Lowell to condescend to anything like playfulness of manner, stood aghast at this outburst of affection and confidence,

and cried out: "Who the deuce are you talking about?"

"Who would you suppose I was talking about?"

"It can't be my sister Mary, for she is very plain; besides she has been engaged to Carl ever since they have known each other," replied Nelson, with more of a desire to tease his companion than a wish to be perverse.

"Your sister seems like a good, amiable girl, and quite interesting; but you know there is but one that I could possibly mean, and that is Miss Rowland, and I can think of no name better suited to her style of beauty than Gartha Rowland," responded Arthur, letting go his hold on Nelson.

There was a strange sensation passed over Nelson, when the professor spoke Gartha's name; to hear it mentioned with tenderness by a young man but a few years older than himself, one possessing the personal attractions of Arthur Lowell, left an unaccountable smart at his heart. There is a lurking selfishness in us all, which comes to the surface when we find other claimants for the favor and regard of those we hold dear, and in the highest esteem; dreading to be shut out from their companionship, by some one who has more right to their affection and love. Not that Nelson was any more selfish than his kind, but he held Gartha to be all that was beautiful, true and noble in woman. She was so artless, so free from guile, and there was a sacredness about her, an unaccountable something that she carried with her; something like the soft breath of a Spring morning which comes



wafting over the flower decked fields, shedding a sweet incense around all who came in its way. He knew Arthur Lowell's narrow nature could never ascend to the world in which she dwelt, or could he appreciate the broadness, depths, or intellect of her mind; the faculty of endowing all creatures with high attributes, and placing them in the ideal atmosphere which she created for herself. Nelson knew that this ideality would make a hero, a young god, of a man with the bearing, physical beauty and a certain cold intellect of Arthur Lowell. And he asked himself if anything happened to bring them together while he was in Europe, would it lessen her friendship for himself, a friendship he now held dear. He thought, not so far as she was concerned, but would Arthur be generous enough to understand it! This was the smart that pricked his heart, this was what had passed through his mind as they neared the gate to the road.

"Why so quiet? Have I touched a tender spot? You can't expect all the good things of this life; you know how I envy you your capacity to paint, your genius; you may call it what you please; you have it, I have not," said Arthur, as they both stopped at the gate to light their cigars.

"I'm not such a lucky dog as you suppose; you know the old adage, 'Lucky in play, unlucky in love,' " returned Nelson with a sigh, and striking his third match with such vehemence that it made the professor feel anything but comfortable. "Not that the tender passion exists between Gartha and myself, not at all, my dear fellow; but I consider her one of

those rare women, whom a man can have for a friend, that to breathe love to would spoil that freedom of intercourse, that high esteem where friendship exists between man and woman. But speaking of the good things of this world, I thought it was you who had more than your share of what people term the best of this life. A good income being laid at your feet, any day you choose to lead the fair lady to the altar. And I hear that you are adored in spite of your freezing dignity, by most of the women and lovely girls who attend the Academy, who are nothing if not artistic, who think painting can be learned, the same as a blacksmith shoes his horse. I thought you too cold-blooded to even feel a passion for any woman, no matter how beautiful, were it not to your interest in pushing you a little farther up the ladder of life."

"By George, Lawrie, you always were hard on me. If you had not such an off-hand way of speaking your mind to a fellow, and hadn't been in times past such a friend, I would feel very much like using my fists on you," replied Arthur, biting the ends of his mustache. "I am not so cold-blooded as you imagine," he continued, brushing the ashes from his cigar. "Perhaps all this adulation you speak of feeds my vanity; I don't know how I should feel if it were taken from me; but one tires of it, and it's refreshing to meet a woman like Miss Rowland, who instead of feeding a man's conceit, and making him think what a splendid fellow he is, he is wondering all the while what kind of an impression he is making on her mind."



"I see you are badly hit," said Nelson.

"Not so badly hit as my vanity is somewhat stung," answered the professor, who had the bad grace of not being willing to acknowledge that he could forget himself long enough to fall in love with a beautiful woman.

"I thought so," returned Nelson, stopping in the middle of the street, for they had now reached the heart of the city. "I leave to-morrow for New York, and sail in a few days from there. I hope after I'm gone you will visit Tanglewood; you can spend a pleasant evening there with mother and the girls. Mary has been quite delicate this summer, and has left off her music for the present, but you will find Carl and his flute there most any evening you chance to go. He is considered one of the family."

"Thanks; I shall be more than happy to avail myself of the privilege to again visit your pleasant home. I wish I could run over with you. I would have gone this month if it were not for the repairs we are having made at the Academy; all speed and au bon voyage. When you return the boys will howl with rage; their hair bristle on ends with envy; and their eyes turn sage green with jealousy at the work you will turn out," said Arthur Lowell, giving his hand to Nelson.

"You may be sure I shall reserve my best efforts for my paintings," was Nelson's answer, as he took the hand of Arthur Lowell, and they separated.

Nelson was on his way home, walking leisurely up one of the public streets when he happened to hear the strains of music in one of the down town summer

gardens. The night was unusually warm, as we know, and the swelling notes of the orchestra were sweet to his ear. Thinking it would be his last night in his own city for some time, he thought he would drop in for a few minutes. He stopped at the gate, paid his twenty-five cents admission fee and went in. It was crowded with people, more of the half world, and many of the working class that are glad to get away from the stifling air of their small, narrow rooms, and breathe the fresh air of an open space, and sit under the trees, if they are stunted and sickly. He took a seat in a shady corner where he had a good view of the stage and the crowd. At a small table near by sat a group of pretty servant girls with their escorts; to his left at a large table, was seated a conspicuous party of six persons. One was a young girl whose face particularly attracted his attention. She did not look to be more than sixteen or seventeen years of age; the style of her dress and beauty of her face would have arrested the eye of any one loving the picturesque. Her hair was a dark, chestnut brown, rolled back from her forehead, with fluffy curls almost touching her penciled brows; its luxuriance gathered into one long braid at the back of the neck which fell to her waist. Her eyes were a dark blue, large and lustrous, shaded by black lashes; her skin had the whiteness of marble, and her small mouth with its pouting red lips, gave it a piquancy that was charming. Her nose was her worst feature, delicate enough until it came to the nostril, where it projected out to a sort of a handle. Her large, white,



Leghorn hat, laden with snowy plumes, was curved and bent on one side of her small, graceful head, and flared up on the other, its swaying feathers falling over the front. She was very slight, but tall, for one still in the middle of her teens; and was clad in the thinnest of white drapery. A lace handkerchief folded over her bosom, the sleeves of her dress came just to her elbow, where they were met by long, black mits, and as she waved a little red fan to and fro there was the blue-white gleam of a diamond flashed from her third finger.

Her companions were two women and three men, either one of the women was old enough to stand in the relationship of mother, but so unlike the girl, Nelson thought, that he felt like dragging her away from any such possible guardianship. They were coarse featured and loud mannered, although richly attired, and their whole *ensemble* stamped them as belonging to the class that float on the surface of the world's respectability.

One of the men, the oldest of the three, a handsome man of fifty years, was all devotion to the girl. The young man, who was seated next to him, and who evidently was his son, as he bore a strong resemblance to him, seemed anything but pleased with his father for absorbing her attention, judging from the scowling brows and angry flash of his eyes, which he darted every little while at Loth. The other man was also middle aged; he had a small weazened face, a light sickly mustache, very much waxed at the ends. He was leaning with head bowed, apparently making

Mother and father are well provided for; Nelson, of course, must make his own way, and if I do not regain my health my Father in Heaven's will be done. We will still be lovers for all time and eternity. And in that world where the soul is divested of the flesh, where no illness, ailments, weakness nor wants of the body shall keep us apart; there in that land where there is no sorrow, no pain, no death, nor decay, there hand in hand, we shall walk up, up, onward, onward, till we stand before Him whose glory and brightness, eye nor heart can conceive of."

Gartha felt the thin hand tremble in hers, and by the dim light of the lamp that fell upon her face, she saw that it was pale, and the sweet smile which came seldom now, shone from her eyes brighter, but sadder than ever before. "Gartha, dear," she continued, "I have no fear of death; I cannot understand the fear which most people have of death; to me death is the resurrection of life, the freeing of the soul from the clay which clogs it. I do not want to die; on the contrary, I should far rather live, and be useful to those who love me, and make their lives happier."

"Oh, my Mary," said Gartha, gently caressing the hand she held in hers, "you are not going to die, and leave your father and mother. Your death would break their hearts, break up the happiness of this happy home, and leave a blank in my life, which nothing could fill. If it should be God's will to take you, you would not go far from us; our hearts would draw you back, and my eyes longing to behold you, would seek to penetrate the veil which obscured you



from my vision. And oh, my Mary, if I should grow weak in the purpose I wish to carry out; if I should allow my aspirations to become clogged by material things; if my feet become weary, and my steps falter and stumble, you, from your spiritual heights so near to God, would in pity stretch forth your hand to help and guide me." She turned her face and gazed thoughtfully out of the window, and the stars that glistened down upon her seemed in sympathy with the minuter ones which moistened her eyes, and coursed down her cheeks.

"If we believe and have faith, we should not fear to die; our Lord has given us the promise in the words, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live, and he that believeth and liveth in me shall never die, but shall have life everlasting.'"

"This is enough to pin our faith to, enough to prove that He was divine, for who but a God would have dared to utter them? He was poor and unknown and He came with arms outstretched at a time when the world was steeped in darkness and depravity, when man knew or recognized no God but himself, no law but human law, made for their own desires. He came with a sorrowing heart for their sins, a love boundless, telling the people He came not to the just but to save sinners. Surely men must be blind when they refuse to believe in Him, and reject His teachings, and proclaim the resurrection a myth. To me there is no better myth to live by, no better to die by. Believe, me, dear, before long

some great disciple, an apostle of Christ, will arise to stay the destruction of the unbelief of the present day; an unbelief which is more death-dealing because more hidden. 'Oh, yes, we believe,' they cry, but as Christ told the Samaritan woman, 'Ye believe, but ye do not know what ye believe.' This apostle must come soon for the 'kingdom of heaven is at hand.' He will come from the ranks of the people; he will be poor and unknown, carrying on his shoulders the cross of poverty. He will uproot the dead fungus, that now stifles the spiritual growth of Christianity. He will infuse new life into the blood of the dead men, who sit in luxurious homes writing sermons on what they please to call religion. A Christianity deadened by the clinging, barren ivy of materialism, which blinds them to all spiritual truths. Therefore they treat us to the brittle pastry, bon-bons, and sweet-meats, of a salvation, making its path where only slippered feet may tread, when we know it is full of quagmires and ditches. His Christianity will be as broad as the Universe, and as high as the stars; he will have no country, no clime, no home, but the church, that will rise on every three or four squares of the city streets; every mile or two of the country roads; with spires reaching to the sky, and with such architectural beauty that each will be forever a prayer ascending like incense to His name. But they must have doors wide and high, thrown open to all, rich and poor, high and low, saint and sinner. He will preach Christ crucified, and His simple, beautiful truths; that Christianity is not a mere name, nor a



mere creed, but a life, and by our works we are known. He will expound its truths to the people, truth, truth, everywhere he will proclaim, though it be as hard as flint, but to those who love it, it is as pure and soft as the mist which lies at dawn, upon the mountain peaks. He will give men something of the spirit of Christ, that will nestle in their bosoms like a dove, and kill the passions that now chain and enslave them and they will have a foretaste of heaven here on earth."

She still sat with her head turned to the window, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes had grown larger with a far-searching gaze, as if they would pierce the veil which hides spirit from matter.

"My Gartha," said Mary, "I never had much liking for women with a mission. I have never believed you were one of them, but I begin to think you are; and from now on don't hide your light under a bushel, but let it so shine that all men and women may see it."

"I am but a poor, weak woman, having to contend with all the drawbacks and obstacles of my sex. I am a woman who will have neither the love of my sisters, or of men, unless some man like Arthur Lowell. It is the fate of all such women as I."

"Yes, women will be envious of you; they will not understand you, nor will they care to understand you. Men will admire your beauty, but will avoid you, because of your intellect; it is sad to think of, but it is true all the same, my Gartha," said Mary, rising from her couch. "Good night my dear," and Mary left for

her own room, which was across the hall and looked out on the orchard.

Gartha threw a light shawl over her shoulders; going to the window she stepped out upon the porch, and stood for some moments gazing on the night, deep, tender and mysterious as a dream. She could see the heavens with its shining planets, and through the trees the white line of the river, and in the distance the hills rising up in black shadows. The oaks went on sweetly whispering her secret, the pines softly, musically sighing it, as the south winds came and went and gently caressed her cheek and hair. "Happy as I am," she murmured to herself, "I cannot banish the thoughts which crowd upon me and point the other way." She went in and closed the window.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE INSULT TO HIS CHEF-D'ŒUVRE.

It was the first night of the opening of the long-looked-for and worked-for exposition, paintings were brought from all parts; some were genuine and some were not; the foreign paintings were given the best place. Then came the works of our own land; they were given the next best, then local art followed, and was treated accordingly. There is an element in human nature which is to see nothing good or beautiful in the things that lie around us; as possession dims the lustre of the brightest and rarest gem. There were to be speeches delivered in the lecture hall by a few of the most distinguished citizens. One of the distinguished gentlemen who was to give a short address on ancient art said that he was pleased to see the hall crowded with the beauty, fashion and culture of the city; the *crème de la crème*; so many representatives of its wealth and refinement; and he hoped the youths who were going to make art a profession would follow in the footsteps of the old and famous men of the past, the old Masters.

Seated to one side in a shadowy corner of the hall, was a dark, picturesque looking man, well known in this history. He would have been observable any-

where, even without his two constant companions, his pipe and his flute. As he leaned back in his chair, with his arm thrown over its side, and his broad-brimmed hat lying on his lap, his face very pale, and it seemed to show irritation at some of the speakers' remarks. After a short while he rose, took his hat and left the hall, and proceeded to the large gallery, where he walked about for some time, taking but a casual glance at the different paintings, and not finding what he sought, he turned his steps to the smaller room. In a corner, hung between two highly colored pictures, where the light fell dimly upon it, their bright, glaring reds, yellows and blues, killing all its soft tones, was "Womanhood," his chef-d'œuvre, his masterpiece. His cheek blanched white; his hat dropped from his hand on the floor; his black eyes shot forth a blaze of defiance, as he ran his fingers through his hair, until it stood bristling up as straight as matches, and almost as inflammable. "Womanhood" was not a masterpiece, nor was it a work of genius, according to a certain standard of art, but so far as knowledge, a dexterous handling of broad low tones, with a tender sentiment pervading it, a love for his art, and a desire to give the people the best that *was* in him, it was a masterpiece. Gartha's pale violet robe blending into a back-ground of misty grays, the light from a window falling on her wavy masses of hair, giving it a rich shade of golden brown, softening the lovely forehead, blue-veined and of marked ideality, the dark brows, the long, dark lashes shading the large, clear eyes, in which he had caught the



light of the soul, and which gave them their deepening, changeful lustre.

Carl stood before it until the people began to crowd the galleries, then picking up his hat from the floor, he took another hurried glance at the rest of the paintings; then went back to the large gallery where he saw Arthur Lowell, standing speaking with two ladies. Carl passed him; Arthur observed the pallor of his face and the fierce lightning flash of his eyes; and he felt that things had not gone to Goetze's liking. He excused himself to the ladies, crossed over to where Carl stood looking at a picture. "I am heartily sorry, my dear fellow. I did my best for you," he said, in his cool, polite manner, which now sounded so hollow and bloodless to Carl, who never moved his eyes from the canvas they were resting on, "those who had the finest paintings, the committee wished hung where they would show to the best advantage. I was very busy at the time of the hanging, but gave a hint to the foreman in charge that I wished yours given a good place."

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It was early Sunday morning; Carl was seated in his old willow arm-chair reading the "Avalanche." He sat in his slippers, hatless, and coatless, with suspenders hanging, the very picture of looseness and carelessness. When he came to where the local artists' work was mentioned he ran his eye down the column until it rested on "Womanhood," and he read to the end the criticism on his beloved chef-d'œuvre. He rose from his chair, his face paler than when Arthur Lowell first beheld it the night of the opening, the brightness of his eyes adding a marble hue. "My life, my soul, what baseness; what a man is made to suffer because he keeps his self-respect and won't truckle," he exclaimed, bitterly, as he paced the floor up and down, fondly hugging his pipe. "How con-



temptible, Mr. Cognesente. As I live, I will give you a piece of my mind, the first opportunity presents itself."

He walked the floor for some time, then picked up his flute, threw himself back into the willow arm-chair. The old Frenchman, a few doors below, who made paper boxes for a living, and generally employed his Sunday mornings in that way, thought when he heard the melancholy strains that the week's business must have been very dull, with Monsieur the artist.

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"You happen to be in bad luck," he said cordially, turning around in his chair and facing Carl as he came towards him.

"Then you have read the puff in the 'Avalanche'?" My soul, yes; what a mean thing to do to one's fellow man," returned Carl, crossing over and seating himself in a chair that stood near an easel by the window.

"Yes, to write such an uncalled-for personal attack, under the guise of criticism, deserves a reprimand," said Arthur. Still, if I were you I would pay no attention to it; I had those two highly-colored

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"You must not take it so hard, my dear fellow, the portrait is one of the best in the collection; hang it in a room where there is any show of harmonious furnishing and it will bring out all its soft gray tones. Besides, you have your friends, and I will do all I can for you."

This meant to be consoling speech had no affect on the heart wounded Carl, he looked upon it as a humiliating patronage, which he did not care to take from Lowell. When he rose to go, Arthur rose also. "My dear fellow do not let this thing worry you; of course it will sting for a while, but I do not think such criticism hurts in the end," he said kindly seeing Goetze to the door.

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seeds when they fall to the ground take root, and bring forth some kind of blossom; and the ranker they are the more they thrive. Nothing that is an injustice hurts in the long run, but how many years of toil and strife, often of great suffering, can be prevented by following the golden rule in regard to our fellow men. We know those who stand on the top stairs, stand there with flaming swords. You dare not approach unless you are confident your weapons are as sharp as theirs, and you can cut your way through; but the battle is sure to be long and fierce. Carl after all was of a hopeful temperament, it was only when disappointments came thick and fast, one after another upon him, that he gave way to fits of melancholy. He was fond of work, and like all fine natures satisfied with but little. He believed there was a natural intelligence in every soul, when aided by reason, that in the end asserted itself, and placed one just where he belonged. But the world is so busy, so absorbed in the small things of daily life, that it seldom takes a look out on the broad field of battle, to see which wins fairly.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### IN WHICH SOCIETY RETURNS TO THE CITY.

It was the month of October, the season of days in which nothing can exceed their beauty ; full ripe days, softened by faint shadows, and made dreamy by tender skies. Days when the fields and meadows sleep in the sunshine, and bathe in a flood of golden mist, as they stretch away to kiss the feet of the hills, that melt into an endless haze of nut brown, tinged with rose and purples. They were days when the south winds sang sadder but sweeter melodies through the pines at Tanglewood, and the cedars which threw their long graceful shadows under the forest trees, that rose tall and stately, and caught up the rythm and echoed it back in the rustle of their sear and yellow leaves. Oh, these days are the sweetest, tenderest, of all the year, they should be a fit semblance of the Autumn of our lives. They were days in which society was fast returning to the dust begrimmed city, from its various summer haunts ; where it had gone to rest and recuperate for the coming winter's campaign. Whether society had accomplished this or not, that was for society to know ; but those who stand on the outside for the purpose of observing society, thought that it came back about as much society blasé as it went.



The Van Court mansion, and the Van Court grounds were again open; the old oaks were fast shedding their leaves. Frank, the black steward was seen every day, for the past four weeks, with a dozen or so of dusky men cleaning paint, and taking up and putting down carpets; and to all inquiries about the family, his answer was, "Massa will be here soon, I spec he's hea befo I'se ready fo him."

Madame Bogardus, maid and the General, had returned with Sam, a son of the General's old black cook, who when given her liberty, had taken herself off to "lib like a respectable freed pussen," as she said. It was evening, and somewhat late, and Madame sits alone, the General is out. Madame never inquires where the General goes; of course the General has gone to his club. Madame reclines in a luxurious arm-chair of pale blue satin; she is clad in a negligée robe of dark red wool, trimmed in some rich figured stuff, and her hair which she has loosened from its comb, falls down her back in a shining mass of gold. Madame is meditating, her meditations ought to be of the pleasantest sort, for nothing could exceed her triumphs at the Springs during the past summer. All men were at her feet, men of all ages and rank paid homage to her charms; she even eclipsed the beautiful young débutante, the only daughter and heiress of Judge Van Court! Yes, even she had to take a back seat, when Madam Bogardus was present. But many who liked the young girl for herself, thought that her engagement to Laurence Carst was a mistake, that it should not have been

announced until fall, and that it dimmed to some extent the brightness of the jewels in her crown, that awaited her entré to society.

Yes, Madame purred all summer, purred sweetly, softly, in the ears, of young men and old men alike; she glided so stealthily into their affections, or at least their passions, that they lived in a fool's paradise. Those yellow orbs, how deep and intense was their glance, her bosom, hills of snow, rising and falling in voluptuous swells; her magnificent arms laden with flashing gems, the undulating grace of her limbs, the sweep of her body, lured and fascinated them until their heads reeled, and they grew drunk with her charms. The fashion correspondents at the Springs, brought everything to bear in the way of descriptive art, in detailing her elegant toilets; from the time she arrived until she returned home, her name, movements, and costumes, were kept constantly before the public. And still Madame is not happy, nor is she meditating on her dresses or social triumphs; she has far more serious things to meditate upon; how she can best keep her dresses and social triumphs. Madame grits her pearls, and unsheaths her white velvet hands; then closes their fingers, and sticks her nails deep into her palms; her yellow orbs as she gazes into the small wood fire in the grate, contract then expand, then glare as if she would like to strike at something. "Bah," she hisses, driving the sharp claws deeper into the tender flesh, "I am thwarted, that fine young fellow has gone to Europe, I feel sure if I could but have carried out my plan I



would have brought them together in a way to let Carst see with his own eyes. How little she cared for him; anything to prevent his marrying her."

Madame grits her pearls. "Bah, what is the young artist to me; what is his life, or her life; yes, ten lives if they stand in my way, and it suits my purpose to get rid of them? Bah, what a loveless match, she would go a whole week at the Springs without speaking six words to him."

Madame relapses into meditation again. Poor mouse, how innocent of harm, yet there was no step taken, no movement made by the young girl, but what was watched by Madame; no turn of her body or head but what was seen by a pair of cold blue eyes that sometimes her girlish beauty softened to a sort of pity, but this pity did not go undetected by Madame, and was the cause of her much reflection.

But why blame Madame? She is a woman of the world, and knows well that this world, and especially her world, is a fluctuating world, and that society rises and falls, after the manner of commercial values, bank bonds, railroad bonds, government bonds, corporation stocks, and so on. And that those who sit enthroned upon the dizzy heights of fashion,—their subjects are anything but loyal; there are too many aspirants for the same place. Besides, Madame is aware that her throne is a slippery one, that a great volcano lies beneath it, only waiting for an eruption to blow her and her throne to the four winds. Madame unsheathes her hands again, then closes them and wraps her nails in their velvet pile. "Carst was

Mother and father are well provided for; Nelson, of course, must make his own way, and if I do not regain my health my Father in Heaven's will be done. We will still be lovers for all time and eternity. And in that world where the soul is divested of the flesh, where no illness, ailments, weakness nor wants of the body shall keep us apart; there in that land where there is no sorrow, no pain, no death, nor decay, there hand in hand, we shall walk up, up, onward, onward, till we stand before Him whose glory and brightness, eye nor heart can conceive of."

Gartha felt the thin hand tremble in hers, and by the dim light of the lamp that fell upon her face, she saw that it was pale, and the sweet smile which came seldom now, shone from her eyes brighter, but sadder than ever before. "Gartha, dear," she continued, "I have no fear of death; I cannot understand the fear which most people have of death; to me death is the resurrection of life, the freeing of the soul from the clay which clogs it. I do not want to die; on the contrary, I should far rather live, and be useful to those who love me, and make their lives happier."

"Oh, my Mary," said Gartha, gently caressing the hand she held in hers, "you are not going to die, and leave your father and mother. Your death would break their hearts, break up the happiness of this happy home, and leave a blank in my life, which nothing could fill. If it should be God's will to take you, you would not go far from us; our hearts would draw you back, and my eyes longing to behold you, would seek to penetrate the veil which obscured you



from my vision. And oh, my Mary, if I should grow weak in the purpose I wish to carry out; if I should allow my aspirations to become clogged by material things; if my feet become weary, and my steps falter and stumble, you, from your spiritual heights so near to God, would in pity stretch forth your hand to help and guide me." She turned her face and gazed thoughtfully out of the window, and the stars that glistened down upon her seemed in sympathy with the minuter ones which moistened her eyes, and coursed down her cheeks.

"If we believe and have faith, we should not fear to die; our Lord has given us the promise in the words, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live, and he that believeth and liveth in me shall never die, but shall have life everlasting.' "

"This is enough to pin our faith to, enough to prove that He was divine, for who but a God would have dared to utter them? He was poor and unknown and He came with arms outstretched at a time when the world was steeped in darkness and depravity, when man knew or recognized no God but himself, no law but human law, made for their own desires. He came with a sorrowing heart for their sins, a love boundless, telling the people He came not to the just but to save sinners. Surely men must be blind when they refuse to believe in Him, and reject His teachings, and proclaim the resurrection a myth. To me there is no better myth to live by, no better to die by. Believe, me, dear, before long

some great disciple, an apostle of Christ, will arise to stay the destruction of the unbelief of the present day; an unbelief which is more death-dealing because more hidden. 'Oh, yes, we believe,' they cry, but as Christ told the Samaritan woman, 'Ye believe, but ye do not know what ye believe.' This apostle must come soon for the 'kingdom of heaven is at hand.' He will come from the ranks of the people; he will be poor and unknown, carrying on his shoulders the cross of poverty. He will uproot the dead fungus, that now stifles the spiritual growth of Christianity. He will infuse new life into the blood of the dead men, who sit in luxurious homes writing sermons on what they please to call religion. A Christianity deadened by the clinging, barren ivy of materialism, which blinds them to all spiritual truths. Therefore they treat us to the brittle pastry, bon-bons, and sweetmeats, of a salvation, making its path where only slippered feet may tread, when we know it is full of quagmires and ditches. His Christianity will be as broad as the Universe, and as high as the stars; he will have no country, no clime, no home, but the church, that will rise on every three or four squares of the city streets; every mile or two of the country roads; with spires reaching to the sky, and with such architectural beauty that each will be forever a prayer ascending like incense to His name. But they must have doors wide and high, thrown open to all, rich and poor, high and low, saint and sinner. He will preach Christ crucified, and His simple, beautiful truths; that Christianity is not a mere name, nor a



mere creed, but a life, and by our works we are known. He will expound its truths to the people, truth, truth, everywhere he will proclaim, though it be as hard as flint, but to those who love it, it is as pure and soft as the mist which lies at dawn, upon the mountain peaks. He will give men something of the spirit of Christ, that will nestle in their bosoms like a dove, and kill the passions that now chain and enslave them and they will have a foretaste of heaven here on earth."

She still sat with her head turned to the window, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes had grown larger with a far-searching gaze, as if they would pierce the veil which hides spirit from matter.

"My Gartha," said Mary, "I never had much liking for women with a mission. I have never believed you were one of them, but I begin to think you are; and from now on don't hide your light under a bushel, but let it so shine that all men and women may see it."

"I am but a poor, weak woman, having to contend with all the drawbacks and obstacles of my sex. I am a woman who will have neither the love of my sisters, or of men, unless some man like Arthur Lowell. It is the fate of all such women as I."

"Yes, women will be envious of you; they will not understand you, nor will they care to understand you. Men will admire your beauty, but will avoid you, because of your intellect; it is sad to think of, but it is true all the same, my Gartha," said Mary, rising from her couch. "Good night my dear," and Mary left for

her own room, which was across the hall and looked out on the orchard.

Gartha threw a light shawl over her shoulders; going to the window she stepped out upon the porch, and stood for some moments gazing on the night, deep, tender and mysterious as a dream. She could see the heavens with its shining planets, and through the trees the white line of the river, and in the distance the hills rising up in black shadows. The oaks went on sweetly whispering her secret, the pines softly, musically sighing it, as the south winds came and went and gently caressed her cheek and hair. "Happy as I am," she murmured to herself, "I cannot banish the thoughts which crowd upon me and point the other way." She went in and closed the window.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE INSULT TO HIS CHEF-D'ŒUVRE.

It was the first night of the opening of the long-looked-for and worked-for exposition, paintings were brought from all parts; some were genuine and some were not; the foreign paintings were given the best place. Then came the works of our own land; they were given the next best, then local art followed, and was treated accordingly. There is an element in human nature which is to see nothing good or beautiful in the things that lie around us; as possession dims the lustre of the brightest and rarest gem. There were to be speeches delivered in the lecture hall by a few of the most distinguished citizens. One of the distinguished gentlemen who was to give a short address on ancient art said that he was pleased to see the hall crowded with the beauty, fashion and culture of the city; the *crème de la crème*; so many representatives of its wealth and refinement; and he hoped the youths who were going to make art a profession would follow in the footsteps of the old and famous men of the past, the old Masters.

Seated to one side in a shadowy corner of the hall, was a dark, picturesque looking man, well known in this history. He would have been observable any-

where, even without his two constant companions, his pipe and his flute. As he leaned back in his chair, with his arm thrown over its side, and his broad-brimmed hat lying on his lap, his face very pale, and it seemed to show irritation at some of the speakers' remarks. After a short while he rose, took his hat and left the hall, and proceeded to the large gallery, where he walked about for some time, taking but a casual glance at the different paintings, and not finding what he sought, he turned his steps to the smaller room. In a corner, hung between two highly colored pictures, where the light fell dimly upon it, their bright, glaring reds, yellows and blues, killing all its soft tones, was "Womanhood," his chef-d'œuvre, his masterpiece. His cheek blanched white; his hat dropped from his hand on the floor; his black eyes shot forth a blaze of defiance, as he ran his fingers through his hair, until it stood bristling up as straight as matches, and almost as inflammable. "Womanhood" was not a masterpiece, nor was it a work of genius, according to a certain standard of art, but so far as knowledge, a dexterous handling of broad low tones, with a tender sentiment pervading it, a love for his art, and a desire to give the people the best that *was* in him, it was a masterpiece. Gartha's pale violet robe blending into a back-ground of misty grays, the light from a window falling on her wavy masses of hair, giving it a rich shade of golden brown, softening the lovely forehead, blue-veined and of marked ideality, the dark brows, the long, dark lashes shading the large, clear eyes, in which he had caught the



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Madame Bogardus, maid and the General, had returned with Sam, a son of the General's old black cook, who when given her liberty, had taken herself off to "lib like a respectable freed pussen," as she said. It was evening, and somewhat late, and Madame sits alone, the General is out. Madame never inquires where the General goes; of course the General has gone to his club. Madame reclines in a luxurious arm-chair of pale blue satin; she is clad in a negligée robe of dark red wool, trimmed in some rich figured stuff, and her hair which she has loosened from its comb, falls down her back in a shining mass of gold. Madame is meditating, her meditations ought to be of the pleasantest sort, for nothing could exceed her triumphs at the Springs during the past summer. All men were at her feet, men of all ages and rank paid homage to her charms; she even eclipsed the beautiful young débutante, the only daughter and heiress of Judge Van Court! Yes, even she had to take a back seat, when Madam Bogardus was present. But many who liked the young girl for herself, thought that her engagement to Laurence Carst was a mistake, that it should not have been

announced until fall, and that it dimmed to some extent the brightness of the jewels in her crown, that awaited her *entré* to society.

Yes, Madame purred all summer, purred sweetly, softly, in the ears, of young men and old men alike; she glided so stealthily into their affections, or at least their passions, that they lived in a fool's paradise. Those yellow orbs, how deep and intense was their glance, her bosom, hills of snow, rising and falling in voluptuous swells; her magnificent arms laden with flashing gems, the undulating grace of her limbs, the sweep of her body, lured and fascinated them until their heads reeled, and they grew drunk with her charms. The fashion correspondents at the Springs, brought everything to bear in the way of descriptive art, in detailing her elegant toilets; from the time she arrived until she returned home, her name, movements, and costumes, were kept constantly before the public. And still Madame is not happy, nor is she meditating on her dresses or social triumphs; she has far more serious things to meditate upon; how she can best keep her dresses and social triumphs. Madame grits her pearls, and unsheaths her white velvet hands; then closes their fingers, and sticks her nails deep into her palms; her yellow orbs as she gazes into the small wood fire in the grate, contract then expand, then glare as if she would like to strike at something. "Bah," she hisses, driving the sharp claws deeper into the tender flesh, "I am thwarted, that fine young fellow has gone to Europe, I feel sure if I could but have carried out my plan I



would have brought them together in a way to let Carst see with his own eyes. How little she cared for him; anything to prevent his marrying her."

Madame grits her pearls. "Bah, what is the young artist to me; what is his life, or her life; yes, ten lives if they stand in my way, and it suits my purpose to get rid of them? Bah, what a loveless match, she would go a whole week at the Springs without speaking six words to him."

Madame relapses into meditation again. Poor mouse, how innocent of harm, yet there was no step taken, no movement made by the young girl, but what was watched by Madame; no turn of her body or head but what was seen by a pair of cold blue eyes that sometimes her girlish beauty softened to a sort of pity, but this pity did not go undetected by Madame, and was the cause of her much reflection.

But why blame Madame? She is a woman of the world, and knows well that this world, and especially her world, is a fluctuating world, and that society rises and falls, after the manner of commercial values, bank bonds, railroad bonds, government bonds, corporation stocks, and so on. And that those who sit enthroned upon the dizzy heights of fashion,—their subjects are anything but loyal; there are too many aspirants for the same place. Besides, Madame is aware that her throne is a slippery one, that a great volcano lies beneath it, only waiting for an eruption to blow her and her throne to the four winds. Madame unsheathes her hands again, then closes them and wraps her nails in their velvet pile. "Carst was

here to-day," she soliloquizes ; "I showed him the bills, he said he would pay my dressmaker's bill, but no others, until after his marriage. Does he mean to give me up?" Madame is deadly pale, her eyes glare, and she shows her pearls, as she makes a movement to clutch at her throat. "Bah, why do I fear? No man was ever more a woman's slave than Carst is mine ; besides, men are moral cowards ; he would do anything to keep from an exposure. Am I jealous? No, let him marry her, and if he dares to draw the reins to my expenditures," Madame rises and paces the floor, her hair falling over her superb shoulders, over the red of her robe, down to her waist, like a veil of shimmering gold, blending in harmonious contrast to her surroundings. She goes to the mirror. Why does she start as she beholds her face? Is it because it is so deadly white, or is it the stealthy cat-like glare of her eyes, as she binds up the yellow shining coils? She leaves the mirror and throws herself back into the satin covered chair, for Madame seems to be in no hurry to retire. Still after a few moment's reflection she changes her mind, rises and rings for her maid, and with the changing of her mind, returns the peach-like bloom to her cheek, for Madame is too well schooled in the world's tactics to even let her maid see the worst side of her feline nature.

The Van Courts, accompanied by Carst, had also returned, there was no improvement in Mrs. Van Court's health, having two or three of her nervous attacks at the Springs, but the Judge thought as soon



as the excitement of Carrie's coming marriage was over, she would feel better. Mrs. Van Court was disappointed and chagrined over her daughter's entrée into the beau monde; she did not take society by storm as she expected; those dreadful people, the Lawries, had bewitched her. Mrs. Van Court forgot that a young lady making her début in the world of fashion, engaged to be married, is a bad thing for the girl, unless she herself is inclined to hold out inducements, and that young men are apt to shy off, or sheer off, as Captain Cuttle advised Bumesby to do.

Carrie, with a will and determination, another part of her father's inheritance, thought when once adrift on the sea of society, she would drink deep of its cup of pleasure, and forget the past, and her love for Nelson Lawrie. She knew she was beautiful, with wealth and position, and had all that the world in which she moved envied. But ever since the night of her début, when she saw her lover side by side with other men, and compared Laurence Carst with Nelson Lawrie, the gay, laughing, impulsive girl became a woman, a woman capable of much that was good and noble; had she been guided rightly, had she been left to her own instincts of right and wrong; had she even been free to take love as a teacher. After parting with Nelson that night, in the pathway, and her interview with her father the following morning, she found that instead of being able to put her love for him aside, and trample it down and out of her life, as she hoped to do, it became a silent wailing

cry, that continually fought for utterance; a firmly rooted love, that she battled with to subdue. She would say to herself, "I can bear this no longer; I will leave father and mother, home and inheritance, and risk all for Nelson's sake." But in calmer moments, she would tell herself that as yet Nelson was poor, and comparatively unknown, and her wealth would go to Carst. "Oh, if I could lay my fortune at his feet, it would be another thing," she would cry.

Carrie Van Court had no resources for a poor man's wife; the quitting of her home, her disobedience to her father's wishes, would simply mean her disinheritance, and the loss of her patrimony; which would weigh upon a nature impulsive, affectionate and generous, with pride enough to smother her love, yet with no inclination to battle with poverty, nor brook its disadvantages. When she went to the Springs she found herself despising the people, whom she had hoped to dazzle; despising her mother for her constant complaining and fault finding; and instead of being at the hop, the ball, instead of being the gayest of the gay revellers, the cynosure of all eyes, she would find herself stealing off with her wraps on her arm, to walk alone among the rocks, listening to the soft rippling streams, climbing up mountain sides, strolling in hidden pathways where nature speaks a language of its own. When she returned at evening to the hotel, and her mother's room, her mother would remonstrate with her, and say that she was shocked at her behavior, and those dreadful people, the Lawries, had ruined her, and she



was not fit for anything. She would answer: "Indeed, mamma, they have, and it would be a good thing if I had never met them." Mrs. Van Court would be horror-stricken and fly all to pieces, which would bring on one of her nervous spells, that would keep poor Carrie a prisoner at her side for days. But as time went on and her marriage to Carst approached, she became more reconciled to her fate, and lulled to some extent the passionate love that for the present took possession of heart and soul. She must accept the things she had no hand in making, she told herself. Laurence had been very considerate with her, she saw but little of him at the Springs, and he seldom made any demands on her; he left her at liberty to do as she pleased.

Poor mouse, happy indeed that your innocence shielded you from a revelation so base, so treacherous. She promised herself that when she was Carst's wife she would join in the giddy throng, the whirl and vortex of the same people she despised at the Springs, she would drink deep of the cup, drink it to the very dregs.

So the days passed, and October with her trailing mantle woven of mist and haze, and embroidered in all the deep, rich colors, hues and tints of ripe fruits, flowers and leaf, left a parting kiss on the brow of the dreamy Indian summer. It was the dawn of a bleak November morning, a young woman wrapped in a long, dark cloak, with its hood drawn up over her head, and a thick veil tied about her face, crossed the common and walked until she reached the gate

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that opened from the side of the road into the garden of Tanglewood, she opened the gate and walked up the path through the orchard to the back porch, and finding the door unlocked, she stepped quietly into the kitchen; there was no one there, Peter, she knew, had risen long before; she slipped into the dining-room and from there into the hall, and passed noiselessly up the stairs to the upper hall and crossed to Gartha's room. She stood a moment at the door, as if listening for footsteps, then softly turned the knob and went in. Gartha lay asleep unconscious of the loudly beating heart and the burning eyes that were now gazing upon the pure, peaceful beauty of her face; and it brought back for a moment to the dark draped figure, some of the old softness, the girlish impulse to give a ringing laugh, a great trill, that would resound through the house and wake its inmates. She untied her veil, let it drop on the floor, and crept up to the bedside, crouched down and took the hand that lay outside the coverlet in hers. Gartha instantly awoke with a cry, "Carrie." She had been dreaming that she had followed Carrie to the church where she had gone with Carst to be married, and was dragging her away from the altar. "My dear child, how came you here; how did you get into the house?" asked Gartha, tenderly, and rising up in bed, she stretched out her arms, threw the hood back off Carrie's face, and drew her head down on her bosom. All the bitterness of the past few months vanished; she was again at Tanglewood, again with Maim and Gartha, her head sheltered on that dear,



womanly bosom. All the old ardent, loving nature reasserted itself, and in the happiness of the moment she forgot but what it was one of those sweet summer mornings, and she had just come tripping up the walk with her throat full of song like the birds to take her lesson, and that Nelson was down stairs in his studio; her love, her lover; crush it, stifle it, as she might, it would cry all the stronger.

“I did not mean to come,” she said, caressing Gartha’s hand; my father forbade me ever coming here, but I could not help it; I have laid awake all night fighting against the desire, but fight as I would I could not overcome the longing to see you and Maim and the dear old house once more before my marriage takes place. I heard that Nelson had gone to Europe or else I should not have dared to come.” She raised her head from where it lay on Gartha’s bosom and took both of Gartha’s hands in hers, and there was moisture in her eyes, that were so dry and hot before. “And, oh, Gartha,” she went on, “if he should ask you about me in his letters, write him if you think it will be any consolation to him to know; if it will make his life pleasanter to know; if he can work to better advantage, to more purpose by knowing; I do not quite understand it, Gartha, dear, but I used to hear you and Maim and him talking about it, about what I am trying to tell you. I used to try to understand it then; I think I do a little now. I mean, Gartha, dear, that if he can better accomplish the aim he has in view, of gaining for himself a great name in his profession; tell him that I love him with



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a love that no words can express. Tell him for me that every breath I draw will be a prayer to heaven for his welfare; that every thought of him will be a petition for his success."

She dropped Gartha's hands, rose up from her crouching position and stood before her. "I thought once that I was not of them nor of you; that I could not be of them nor of you; that I was not good enough in a way, that my training and education had been different from theirs and yours, and that I was so far removed from them and you I could never be like them nor you. But what would I give to be of them and of you, to spend my days in this quiet, peaceful home. Oh, Gartha, morning star, shed some of your pure light about me, throw some of it out to brighten the shadows of this dark, dark, day, my wedding day," she cried, wringing her hands; then they fell limp and motionless at her side, as she turned away, and stepped to the middle of the room; then back again to the side of the bed, where she stood; her face pale and haggard, her eyes dry and hot, and burning with unspeakable pain; her upper lip drawn firmly down, hardening the lines of the mouth, and giving it an expression of bitterness.

Gartha, happy in her own love, happy in the coming of her marriage, felt keenly the anguish of this poor girl. She had blamed her for the course she had taken, for the throwing away of Nelson's love, for the sake of a rich and brilliant marriage with Carst. But to see the gay, impulsive, joyous girl, of a few months before, whom they all loved, who made



every day bright and glad with her coming to the cottage; so changed by suffering, that turned her to the hardened woman, that now stood before her. Gartha's heart was pierced to the quick. She had forgotten Carrie's suffering, in the suffering of her friend, Nelson; she had given the sympathy to him she should have extended to this poor child, who was forced by a parent's will into a hateful marriage. For boast as we may about our civilization, and the freedom of woman, she is still a slave, still bought and sold in the market of custom and conventions that society hedges her about with. It is only the strong woman, morally and mentally, who can stand up and claim, I am mistress of myself, of my body, heart and soul. She will have to know what this means. It means to be jeered at both by men and women; it means to turn her face from the world; to hew out her own pathway; to make her own happiness, and live her own grand, free life.

Gartha rose from her bed, and caught Carrie's hand, as she went to leave the room, her face was flushed, her eyes full of a tender pleading and affection for her friend; and her tall white figure stood out against the dark form of Carrie, like a ministering angel leading it into the light.

"Carrie, dear," said Gartha, pushing the hair from her brow, "I entreat you by all that is good and womanly in your nature, not to steel your heart against the crime of giving your hand to this man, while you love another. Oh, Carrie, this dark, dark day should be the brightest, the sunniest and gladdest

day of all the days that come into your life. This day should be the crowning pride of your womanhood; this day you give yourself into the keeping of another, at the altar before God, you plight your vows, and when the final words are spoken, which make you man and wife; there is no cleaving, no sun-dering the ties without the shame and curse that follows. The words are few, but a silken thread, as it were, a mere spider web, but what chains, what bars of iron, can be stronger; side by side you rise or fall with him. Let those who may look on marriage lightly, a mere contract to be severed at will; but He who made the laws, made them inexorable, break them, and what ills, what sorrow will follow. Even with love, holy love, marriage is not a path always made soft with green grass, and strewn with the perfume of wild flowers; but one with many rugged places, many thorns and briars, that prick not only the hands and feet, but the heart as well. This day, Carrie, you stand before the world and God, telling a lie, that you must ever after live, live until death separates you; a lie that will scourge you every hour of your existence. You are another's, Carrie, you love him, he loves you with a love seldom given to woman, for it has all the fresh, pure sweetness of a splendid young man's first passion, and you are bound to him, by that love. Carrie, love is sweet to the heart of every woman, it is like the blossoming of spring, opening and expanding her life, its fragrance adding incense to her youth, and softening her later years, with a tender halo."



"Oh, my Gartha, say no more," she cried, releasing herself from Gartha's hold and raising her arms above her head, there was a piteous appeal in her voice, but her eyes were dry and hot, and burned like coals of fire, "these better things are not for me, you only make the dark shadows that crowd into this day all the blacker by the brightness of your light. My marriage is not of my making, papa and mamma are responsible for it; they must take the blame of what follows; my duty is to obey them."

"Carrie, there is no duty nor obedience, which justifies you in this," said Gartha, clasping her hands again, "it is a crime crying out against all that is sacred in the life of woman; no, Carrie, though they dragged me to the altar, with uplifted arms, my answer would be, 'I do not love this man, my heart is another's.'"

"Stay, stay, say no more; it is too late, too late," she said, tearing her hands from Gartha. She turned away, went to the door, opened it and stood for a second with locked hands, head thrown back and eyes raised to Gartha's as if invoking her blessing. Then she left the room, walked slowly down the stairs, and out into the gray haze of the morning.

Three hours later Carrie Van Court stood in her own room, arrayed in all the rich magnificence of her bridal robes, their whiteness scarcely outvying the paleness of her face, where rested no trace of the hard battle which had been fought that morning. There was no sign of the suffering she had passed through, unless the pain in her eyes, and the slight

clutch of the fingers, as her maid fastened the necklace of costly gems on her snowy throat, the bridal present of Carst.

"My daughter, are you ill? You act so strangely; you have never been yourself since you met those very peculiar people. I have always blamed myself for not having kept a closer watch on your coming and going; I ought never to have allowed your intimacy with those very odd people," said Mrs. Van Court, who was sitting in her chair, dressed in violet velvet and point lace.

"No, mamma, I am not ill, I was not aware I looked so."

"My dear Clara, don't worry, it's nothing unusual for brides to look pale; you would not have Carrie look rosy, that would destroy all sentiment; pale and interesting is the thing for brides, you know," said Topping, who was posing before the mirror in powdered hair, powdered arms and neck, and dressed in the Parisian costume she had ordered for the occasion; a symphony in sea green, as she told Clara. And Topping's cheek would have been a symphony in yellow, if it had not been for the thick coat of Récamier cream and rouge she had so artistically applied to hide the wrinkles.

"Now, Clara, dear, don't it make you think of your own wedding day? How vividly it recalls mine. I can see myself so delicate and petite and white as a marble statue. Yes, as pale as Carrie, there, but I had such a lovely complexion, you can judge from the color of my hair, what my complexion must have



been in those early years. Felix thought me fair ; yes, I was very fair. Now, Clara, do keep up, it will soon be over with, just think what a son-in-law you are going to have," posing this time for the Judge, as he entered the room, smiling and bowing to the ladies. He was happy to see Mrs. Topping, thankful for the interest she took in the family, and her untiring help to his wife, in the preparation for Carrie's wedding, as Clara was not strong. Then looking at his daughter, he remarked that there was no time in a girl's life when she was so interesting as on her wedding day, and if she happened to be beautiful, there was nothing could exceed the charm of a bride. "And now, my daughter, everything is settled, seven thousand a year in your own right is not bad, with your jewels and wedding outfit ; and when your mother and myself have passed away, all my wealth is yours. I shall leave it all to you, and so fixed that your husband shall have no control of it."

He stooped down and kissed her on the cheek. "The last kiss, my Carrie, before I give you to another." The subject of Nelson's interview and her own with her father, the morning after the ball, had never again been alluded to by either father or daughter.

"Carrie, it is time we were going, the carriages are waiting and all the bridesmaids have assembled in the drawing-room," said the Judge, looking at his watch, then turning to his wife, he added: "See that Charlotte wraps you up warm, the air is quite chilly, and the ride to the church is some distance. Come, my daughter, come."

Oh, how listlessly she puts her arm through his, the snowy veil helping to hide the deadly pallor of her face; how she staggers and almost falls, as she steps to the door and down the stairs, to the drawing-room, where she is met by Laurence Carst, looking every inch a bridegroom. If there is any consciousness of his falseness, his baseness, if there comes to him for a moment any remorse or pain, for the betrayal of one so innocent; there is no evidence of it in the cold glitter of his eyes, nothing of it in the brilliant smile, or in the touch of his delicate gloved hand, as he takes hers in his. He well knows the eyes of the cat are on him; he cannot escape those yellow orbs, try as he may.

Yes, Madame Bogardus is there, superb in her shimmering satin and lace, superb in the splendor of the red glow of her rubies, that make blood stains on the white light of her glistening, gleaming, flashing gems. Madame is the wife of General Bogardus, who is a near cousin of Carst, which gives her the right to be there. Many eyes are on her, but no one would ever suppose that Madame ever meditated; she is looking a little pale, it is true; still Madame never purred more softly, those yellow orbs were never more melting, never step more velvety, as she glided in and out in her voluptuous tread. The cat has caught her mouse, whether the mouse will succeed in getting away before the cat sticks her claws too deep in her tender flesh, leaving her bleeding and sore, with wounds that will never heal, we must wait for time and this history to reveal.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE COMING OF ANOTHER WEDDING.

TANGLEWOOD lay hushed and still in the twilight glow of a closing December day; the cottage sought shelter behind the great trees, from the bleak north winds, that moaned and soughed through their bare branches, making music as weird as the touch of spirit fingers playing on harp strings. The chilling hand of winter is laid on all nature, but marred not its beauty, as some who are beautiful in death, the death which is only waiting for the resurrection to life.

It wanted but a few minutes of the Lawries' tea hour; the sitting-room was a dream of coziness, warmth and comfort. The heavy crimson curtains which were by day tied back by cord and tassel, so as not to exclude the sunshine from the plants, were now drawn together. Peter was seated in his corner near the large, radiant fire that threw over the room a red glow, which mingled with the pale, mellow rays of the student lamp that stood upon the center table. This corner was reserved for Peter during the winter, his work being done, until the spring, unless going to market and doing some of the small chores about the house. He had on a long gray flannel dressing gown

lined with red, that came down to his slippers, one his wife had made for him, as he complained very much of the cold. This with his high beaver hat, old and bent, his long limbs stretched out on both sides of the stove, Peter was a picture, I assure the reader, for it was Peter's privilege to wear his hat in the house, a privilege he took without asking any one's leave. Mrs. Lawrie was dozing in her chair, Mary reclined on the couch wrapped in shawls; Gartha was seated by the table crocheting a small wool jacket for a poor woman's child. She wore a dark navy blue cloth dress, with touches of dark maroon here and there, and at moments there was such a happy expectant look in her eyes, only the next to be tinged by a sweet sadness.

"Wal, Garthar," said Peter, breaking the silence and pushing his hat back off his forehead, "if some artist, Carl or some of those other high art students, could paint you jist as you sit thare with that look on your face, what a picture you'd make; they'd have nothing to growl about then, but it would be a purty hard thing to do, and I be blamed if any of them high art fellows could do it, with all their conceit and criticism, of values and tones an' tonalities, an' every other blamed nonsense."

"It is very difficult to always catch one's best expression," said Gartha, biting her lips to keep from laughing outright, "besides one is not always in a pleasant mood, and sometimes chance arrangements are better than those thought over by the artist."

"Jist so, exactly, jist so," replied Peter, bending his



hat over his eyes and lapsing into silence. After a few moments he tipped his hat back off his forehead again. "Wal, Gartha, did you ever see any one sleep like mother, jist let her sit down any whare, or any time of the day, and she'll drop off to sleep. I farmly believe she'd go to sleep on a log in the middle of the river."

"That is the secret of her good health, it is such a blessing to sleep well," replied Gartha.

"Wal, yes; but you know what a hand she is to trot; I keep the fires a going and do the errands, order all the provender consumed in the house; besides she's got that blinky eyed gal out thar to help her." Peter bent his head, rubbed his hands over his brows and eyes. "It's as nataral for her to trot as it's for her to sleep, she wouldn't be happy if she didn't." Peter bowed his head and covered his face with his hands; after a pause of some moments his face gradually appeared from behind them, his mouth stretching from ear to ear, as the form of Arminta rose up before him. "Wal," he went on trying to master its contortions as his risibles got the better of him, "that blinky eyed gal out thar in the kitchen is a curiosity sure, she makes me laugh every time I think of her." Here Peter's mouth stretched again, his laugh was a mere expanding of the lips, "but, Gartha, I don't like to see her thar, not that I begrudge mother her help, oh no, Gartha, but it's a kind of change that I cannot get used to; no, Gartha, I don't like to see her thar, I know what it means."

"What notions have you gotten into your head

now, father?" said Mrs. Lawrie, waking up from her doze and looking over her glasses with sleepy eyes at her husband, having caught here and there snatches of the conversation and guessed at the rest.

"You've got mighty sharp ears, mother, or else you've been playing possum; I thought Garthar an' I were having a quiet little chat all to ourselves."

"You are getting all manner of strange notions into your head lately, father; your corner there is too warm, it has a tendency to hatch them."

"I thought, mother, you war away up in the land of dreams, away up towering you know."

"I haven't towered so high but what I have heard all that was said."

"Did you? Wal, jist so, exactly, jist so," returned Peter. Then the door of the sitting-room was suddenly opened and Arminta made her appearance. "Did you call, ma'am?" she asked, folding her arms.

"Arminta, I didn't call, but I think it must be very near tea time," answered Mrs. Lawrie, rising and following after Arminta, as she went back to the kitchen.

"I wonder what Nelson thought of that gal, as a piece of high art," remarked Peter, as Arminta disappeared out the door. "What a picture that curiosity would make, what a study she'd be for an artist's brush. Nelson used to be eternally sketching her, not only with pencil and paints, but mimicking her every movement and gesture. Poor boy, how dull the house is since he left."

Later on Arthur Lowell stood looking over



Gartha's shoulder, watching the nimble fingers plying the crochet needles. Carl was seated near Mary; he was reading out of a volume of Mrs. Browning's poems, and had paid no heed to Peter's and Gartha's little chat, as it was carried on in a low voice. Then the tea-bell rang and they all went out to the dining-room, bright with blooming plants, the glow of the fire, the warmth of youth and happy serenity of age.

Arthur Lowell's visits to the cottage had become more and more frequent, until every evening found him seated at Gartha's side. He thought the cottage, so far as its arrangements, furnishing and home life, perfect. He would like to have his house as much like it as possible, so he said one evening to Gartha after their engagement, but it would be hard to find the rare, old-fashioned things that made it so artistic. As they were to be married in the spring, he told her of a house, some two or three blocks east of Tanglewood. It stood on a hill, nestling among tall oaks and cedars. It had been built by a consumptive maiden lady from the North. Finding the climate more mild and moist than in her own northern village, she built the house with the intention of residing in the neighborhood the rest of her days. But after three years of quiet and rest, and having, as she supposed, fully recovered her health, a longing came upon her to return once more to live in her own beautiful native town, where she died. The house had been sold, but was now for rent, and he had rented it. The rooms, six in number, were large and airy, finished in walnut and oak, and from its front porch,

one had a full view of Tanglewood. A short distance from its gate a path wound from the road, leading up to the door of a small Gothic chapel, seamed and blackened with age, but the Virginia creepers which twined up about its walls and steeple added much to its picturesqueness.

When the family returned to the sitting-room, Arthur, in his most graceful way, begged permission to lead Mary to the piano; the evening would not be complete without his favorite "Blue Bells of Scotland," and other airs by herself and Carl. Mary was not exactly a St. Cecelia, her music was more like the warm showers of the first May days and the soft sunshine that follows, than devotional.

Slowly, slowly, the notes rise and fall, heart speaks to heart of sweet love, of tender wooing, of delicious dreaming and of future happy hours. Mrs. Lawrie forgot her cares and troubles, her head fell back in a doze, and her spirits soared up, up, among the blessed. Peter also forgot himself, and time reverted, and he was again young and back in his dear, antiquated New England village, and the heat of the fire and magnetism of youth infused new vital force into his blood, and awakened a touch of the old passion which had long slumbered, and he was again in love with his wife, who was once more the young and handsome Susane Simmons. Then the slender fingers grew tired, and ceased their motion, Carl's chest stopped heaving, and gradually the flute ripples died away and each one was brought back to reality.



“Mary, dear, don’t weary yourself,” said Mrs. Lawrie, opening her eyes, after she had come down from the clouds; then she rose and beckoned Peter to follow her, and she left the room. And it was only a little while when Carl took his leave for home, and Mary retired to her room, and Arthur and Gartha found they had the sitting-room all to themselves. They lingered long in the mutual converse which is only known to lovers. Love is a dead language, so far as speech is concerned, but there may be volumes spoken in the touch of the hand, in the glance of the eyes, and the blush that mounts like flame to the cheek and as quickly pales again. To Gartha with her natural refinement, which was her inheritance and made more exquisite by cultivation, a desire for the beautiful, to see it in all things and surround herself with it, this wealth of love would often make her pause in her daily task and ask herself if this crowning happiness had not come to her too suddenly, if it were real or only a dream from which she would awaken to a sunless day. For in all her imagining of her ideal, she never fancied the realization would be so fair. Sometimes when the sense of her love, of its fullness and richness came upon her, she would grow faint with joy; her roses were too ripe, her exotics too rare; she dare not inhale so much perfume; the lilies would have suited her better. “Am I worthy of all this?” would be her mental interrogation. “Will I grow indolent and depend too much on another and allow the things of this world to clog

my aspiration? Ah," she would answer, "who could be more worthy of it all than Arthur Lowell?"

They stood near the window, Arthur with his arm about her waist, and nothing could be more suggestive of the stronger sheltering the weaker; but Gartha had no consciousness of the stronger, the weaker or superior; she only knew that she loved him, that he was her ideal, her king. They stood there in the gladdening warmth, in the midst of the greens and crimsons and the pale pinks of the flowering plants, the red gold of the fire-blaze that danced and leaped and threw fantastic shadows about them and on the walls, over the pictures, and peeped and laughed, coquetted and kissed, and wrestled with Cupid to keep him from sticking his arrow too deep in one heart at least. They stood there a picture of the highest art, a group which was a masterpiece chiseled by the great Sculptor of all.



## BOOK II.

### CHAPTER I.

WHAT DOES HE SAY? WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE SAYS.

It was one of those cold, clear mid-winter nights; the January thaw that had come in with the beginning of the month had disappeared with a heavy fall of snow. The thermometer had made a run down to zero and remained there for four and twenty hours, which was the longest stretch of cold at that temperature in the recollection of the oldest inhabitant of the city or state. All day long the tramp, tramp of many feet, coming and going, softened the snow to slush and mud about the "Market Place." The occupants of the stalls and booths took shelter behind their half-drawn shutters, and every little while warmed their hands over the small charcoal stoves. The torch lights on the stands spattered and spittered, throwing the shadows of the passers-by over the pavement, and over the street, in all sorts of grotesque forms. The electric lights flickered and sizzled above the heads of the crowd. Women, in rich silks and jewels, muffled to their chins in costly furs; women thinly clad, with shawls thrown over

their heads, shivering with the cold as they carried a child in their arms, as poorly clad as themselves; women with bold, flashing eyes and bolder faces, the rouge thick on their cheeks. They laugh and chat gaily as they pass on, or stop to purchase some oranges or an apple, and stretch out a bare hand for the change, the fingers of which are laden with gems that catch the yellow flame of the torches and throw it out again in sparks of a hundred hues. Men elegantly dressed, but with slinking gait and furtive, evil eye; men with the collars of their great coats drawn up about their ears, very comfortable looking; they walk with a quick, buoyant step, as if all was well with them. Other men, having no outer coats, their bare hands thrust down in their trousers' pockets for warmth, their shoes down at the heels, walk with a shifting, shuffling step, which even the intense cold has no power to urge on and keep pace with their fellows. These are they who falter by the way-side, lose hope and courage and their grip in the fray of life. And the crowd surged on, to and fro, along Broadway, past the Market Place, along Sixth street, and up the Ave. F.

The Ave. F., which was about a block north of the Market Place, ran east and west for some miles, and was lined on both sides with small shops of every kind and description, which go to supply the wants and commodities of the people, from the laborer up to the well-to-do artisan, clerk and salaried man. These shops kept open until nine o'clock in the evening, and on Saturdays until ten. Here gathered the young



saleswomen, employed in the large fashionable downtown stores, that close at six. The young mechanics and clerks, out for a jaunt, the young couple just gone to house-keeping out to make a few purchases, looking for bargains. All these, with fathers, mothers and children, crowded this avenue, clear from Twenty-eight St. down to the Market Place, where they stopped for their food supplies, and in the evening when the shops were bright with electric lights they made a gay medley throng.

Down in the lower part of the Ave. F., and to the southeast, around Sixth and Seventh streets, to the northeast, people live in small, tottering tenements, which line the sides of the short cross-streets and alleys. These short cross-streets lead into the Ave. F., or rather lead off it. They are filled with little huckster shops, saloons, groceries, where lager beer is kept on tap, bakeries with a small round table in one corner, covered with a marbleized oil-cloth, where some hungry man or woman can purchase a cup of coffee and a bun for five cents, the coffee remarkable for its grounds and muddiness. In the summer months, from the Levee up as far as Fifteenth street, the whole district is alive with multitudes of men, women and children, from all countries and climes, a mixture of all nations, from the native negro to the Spaniard, the Italian, Chinese, Pole and the Russian Jew. But from Tenth street up to Fifteenth the neighborhood is better and has a sort of individuality of its own; a sort of quaintness is to be seen in the small one-story house, with a

porch and creeping vines, a front yard, with its bed of geraniums, and next to this is perhaps one of more pretensions, a two-story brick, setting its front squarely down upon the pavement. Then farther on, a modern row of two-story flats of three rooms.

Between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets upon the Ave. F. was a Methodist Holinesss Church Mission. It was a long, narrow room that had been used for a store. The ceilings were high, and there were large plate-glass windows in front, and large double doors opened from the street into the hall. The Rev. Mr. Clifton held services here three times a week, which included Sundays; the rest of the evenings it was presided over by some Christian women workers, women gifted in prayer, and those, with sweet voices, led the singing—with some young and pious girl playing the organ.

On this Friday evening the Rev. Cyrus Alvin, so beloved by his congregation, and especially the poor and the working people, was to preach. He preached at the Mission every Friday evening, which brought crowds of the same class who were to be found in the Market Place. Cyrus Alvin was one of those rare men, who, at an early age, became imbued with an ardent desire to save his fellow men. He looked out on the great, wide world, with a broad reaching mind and far-seeing eyes. Proctor, the poet astronomer, says, "There are one-story men, two-story men and three-story men, with a sky-light in their heads." Such a man was Cyrus Alvin in his line. He not only wanted to sweep the earth of sin, but to



teach men that it lay within themselves and in their own power to scale the heavens. He felt that he had something to give the world, some new message (that is the old put in a new way). Every day he saw thousands and thousands of men and women going down to destruction and death, slaves to the passions that they made no effort to subdue, but rather sought by every means to stimulate, until desire and gratification became the dominant vice of their lives, and that desire and gratification was the dominant vice of the age. That many of the old ideas in regard to heroes and heroism must be gotten rid of and given place to new. That the only heroism is where men or women give their lives to the saving and uplifting of humanity, and in doing so became saved and uplifted themselves. That war in this age should not be tolerated, unless against tyranny and oppression, and in defense of one's own country. That every schoolboy should be taught and impressed that to butcher and kill his brother man in war, for the sake of conquest, was not bravery nor heroism, but barbarism, paganism, animalism. Using the words of the scriptures, "He that saveth a soul is greater than the general who taketh a whole City," that the teachings of Christ are inexhaustible, equal to any progress, capable of the greatest heights and deepest depths, and not a sentence in the New Testament but what teaches the saving and uplifting of the whole human family. That our Lord meant men to be free, to have a taste of His peace, joy and happiness here on earth, and that all things should be theirs, and

that they should rise to the full stature of a man, which means to be the sons of God. And the only road to this was in the annihilation of the passions, not good, healthy, honest, human passions, but their excess, their dominance, until men became their slaves and monsters instead of men. That was not necessary, as the old preachers thought, for a man or woman to go on sinning until they died, for if sin brings its attendant miseries, we can never then reach the God-like here. That the soul of man must be fed from the source of all spirit, which is God, and if a man does not live in God, and the love of God, he is simply an animal, and the beast in him becomes king, making all kinds of demands upon him, and this king is the passions.

So we find Cyrus Alvin, on this cold winter's night, when Gartha Rowland first heard him preach, little thinking she herself would be called upon to drink of the bitter cup, and drink it to the very dregs; when she cried out within her, "that he was the man she had prophesied of." Three years before he had startled his large congregation in a western city, where he was pastor of a very flourishing Methodist church, by a sermon on the second blessing, or the higher Christian life, which he kept up, much to the annoyance of some of his more wealthy members who did not believe in any such nonsense that any one could live without sinning this side of the grave. When his term of years expired he left the church to go out as an evangelist, feeling he would not be so hampered and that he could reach more people that



way and lead them to this higher Christian life. He loved God's church, but his spirit chafed and fretted under its discipline, its narrow confines, and those he was obliged to obey. He wanted more scope for his thought. He was heard to say once that most of his church members were spiritually invalided, gospel hardened, and the rest were sick. That he had to listen to bickerings, carpings, chitter, chatter, and that he suffered from all kinds of petty jealousies; That if he was seen to greet Sister Piefer, who was poor, but a saint, often or very cordially, Mrs. Snob gave him the cold shoulder for weeks, because Mrs. Snob's husband gave dollars to the church, where Mrs. Piefer only gave cents.

He had now been over a year in the old city, and his followers had bought the old Methodist Tabernacle down in the heart of the city, which he filled to its doors every time he preached, which was twice on Sunday, and on week nights when he was not engaged at the different Missions. He was scarcely forty years old, and had lifted up more men and women out of the sloughs and troughs of sin and set them squarely on their feet, than any other preacher of his day. There were hundreds and hundreds of men and women, who could testify to being slaves of strong drink, that had been cured under his preaching, as he himself said, "The Holy Spirit had burned sin and the desire and appetite out of them, and these men and women bless His name."

When Gartha reached the Mission there were still a few people straggling in; as she stepped up from



the pavement upon the floor of the vestibule, a woman from the easterly direction stepped up at the same time. As she paused a moment to let the woman go before her, the electric light blazed up and shone full upon the woman's face, accentuating its pallor; but the face, though worn and marred by ill health, had lines of great beauty, such uncommon beauty, and such a distinguished appearance, that Gartha started back and took a pace or two, as the large, sunken eyes, which looked like deep, dark caverns with fire flaming up from their depths, met hers, and it seemed to her there was hunger, remorse and soul suffering in the glance she flashed into Gartha's, as she drew aside into the shadow, went in and became lost in the crowd. Gartha made her way to an upper part of the hall, near the pulpit, the people parting to let her pass, for the aisles were filled, and she was well known now and loved in that locality.

It was not long until the Rev. Cyrus Alvin made his appearance. He had created quite a stir by his sermons, and his name was now on all lips, that is those in church circles, and many also on the outside. His name was not always spoken of in praise, but the greater part of the criticism came from men, who, while admiring his power and eloquence as a speaker, scoffed and sneered at his teaching. "How can any human being live on this earth and be holy, or live a perfect Christian life? We don't want this doctrine, we won't have it, away with it." "What does he say?" His disciples asked themselves. "We cannot tell what he says. He says if we experience the blessing of



sanctification and receive the baptism of fire, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we shall be cleansed from inbred sin and have a taste of Heaven here on earth. That while conversion and regeneration are good and great, it does not do the work in the soul, that the baptism of fire does, which is the second blessing. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that which is born of the spirit, is spirit. (John, chap. III. VI. verse). What does he say?" they asked among themselves, like the apostles. "We do not know what he says."

But there were those who did give ear to what he said, and believed, and the spirit gave them understanding. Now we will turn our eyes in his direction as he stands upon the altar with Bible in hand.

He is of medium height, of slender, sinuous figure, the head is small and beautiful in contour, some silver threads streak here and there the light brown hair, which lies upon a forehead where intellect, ideality and spirituality predominate. The features are almost perfect in their clear cut lines, the brown mustache lends grace to the cheek and conceals a mouth where sweetness, refinement, tenderness and strength mingle. The deep set, grey eyes are quick, restless, and have an eagle-like flash; they are regular soul catchers, soul holders. If there was a sinner in the audience, man or woman, whose face gave any sign of softening, they saw it and secured him or her, and he never rested until he had the man or woman up at the altar confessing his or her wrong doings. They were wonderful eyes in their intensity,

and the light which burned with a flame that radiated the whole face and made it lovely to look upon.

After the audience sang a hymn, it knelt in prayer; his voice was strong and musical, rising and falling like the echoes of a flute. The words came one upon another, fervent, eloquent and full of a passionate pleading, asking of God, through His Son, the Saviour of the world, to be merciful, kind and pitiful to His erring children, to soften their hearts one to another, and pour some of His divine love into their breasts, that they might love one another and help to bear each others' burdens; as He said to his apostles, "By this all men shall know ye are my disciples," and finishing up with the Lord's prayer. And when he rose from prayer, he read from Acts, "And being assembled together after His resurrection, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith He ye have heard from Me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

He stood before them the very embodiment of the message he had for them; every fibre of his thin, nervous body quivering; his pale face illumined; his eyes burning with a spiritual flame, which flashed up hot from his soul, like the crystal light of the stars in the firmament of night. He told his hearers that Christ came to save men. The whole New Testament was a sermon for the saving of the human race, every sentence was replete with love and a burning desire for the salvation of humanity. Like in the



parable of the sheep. "What man having a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doeth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray. And so be that he find it, verily I say unto ye, he rejoiceth more over that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." So you see, my brothers, our Lord wants a world of men and women, neither deformed in body, mind nor soul, but if the soul is sick in sin the body and mind must be sick; keep the soul clean, pure and holy, and the body will be healthy, handsome and lovely to look upon; for the body is the temple of mind and soul. Nicodemus went to Christ at night, and the Lord said to him, "Unless a man be born again of the spirit, he cannot enter into the life eternal, the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." Jesus said to His apostles, "If I do not go away the comforter will not come." And when he came he would burn and purge and cleanse the soul of inbred sin; this terrible inbred sin, the sins of inheritance. The apostles had been converted and regenerated, they were the companions of the Lord, but they were still weak men, lacking in understanding, in much of the heavenly truths which he taught them, until they received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; what we term the second blessing.

"I want to tell you of it to-night, dearly beloved brothers; tell you of the peace and joy, and the love which comes to the heart, and which is the gift of God, to all who will seek it. It is within reach of

all who will forsake their sins, and be converted and regenerated first. But the regenerated man has but a taste at times of the continual feast, which comes from this blessing; his Christian life is ups and downs, a constant warfare, battles every hour with sin; days and days of drouth, only now and then a few refreshing showers; a week or two when the balm of Gilead rests on the heart. But this gift blesses the soul for months with the rich odorous oil of love, it quenches its thirst with the wine of life. It makes poor homes beautiful, the bare plaster-walls become fair to the eye, they hang with pictures, costly tapestries and rare paintings, because the eye looks inward to the house of the heart. The bare boards now clean, become softer to the foot, as though covered with Axminster and Wilton carpets; for when the soul has spiritual wealth, the material things are of little count. Yes, dear brethren, the humble meal becomes a feast, poverty after all is much in mind, I don't mean abject poverty or destitution, God never meant His children, whom He gave sound bodies and minds, and hands to work, and a land flowing with milk and honey, to be put to any such straits. Under our present conditions we cannot get along without a little money, and most of these conditions are created by greedy and avaricious men, who lay burdens on other men's backs and are not willing to carry any themselves. 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest unto your souls. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,



for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Yes, all must labor; work is sweet, and more sweet when seasoned with love. God's blessing is upon the honest wages of the workman, when he brings it home to the good wife at the end of the week; and, my dears, when you get the gift of the Holy Spirit, your little money becomes a gold mine, it destroys all desire for liquor, tobacco and all kinds of stimulants. It burns the sin out of you, brother.

"You come home to a good fire in the cold winter's night, and there is plenty of coal in your cellar; in the morning you get up to a comfortable breakfast, a good cup of coffee, with bread, a slice of ham or bacon, and there is plenty of meat and potatoes for dinner; plenty of good warm clothing for your wife and children, besides peace in your breast and in your home, and love for God and your neighbor. How many of you men who are here tonight, who are slaves to strong drink, which keeps your poor wives and children cold and hungry, and your homes desolate. Come up to the altar and be saved, seek this blessing and become free men in Christ Jesus. This gift, dearly beloved, gives you a taste of Heaven here on earth; it not only gives you the water of life, but the wine also, brother. Jesus likens this blessing, this heavenly gift, to a merchantman, traveling into a far country in search of goodly pearls; he comes across one of great value, of great price; he sold all his other rare and costly pearls to purchase this one pearl of great value. Oh, my brother, come and purchase this pearl of great price, this precious jewel,

this gift from God; it's for all who seek it, for the most humble; it costs no money, all the gold mines on earth couldn't buy it. Who will place all on the altar, oh, my friends, come and purchase this heavenly gift, this peace which passeth all understanding. Christ was the merchant-man, who purchased this pearl of great price, for you and for me, by His death on the cross and His resurrection. Come and seek this treasure, this beautiful thing that nestles in the heart like a dove. Come all those who labor, who are weary, tired and sin-sick, who are poor, despised and forsaken, and drink of this wine of life."

His face seemed transfigured as the words fell from his mouth like a bubbling spring, his eyes shone and glowed and flashed with a holy light, which seemed to send its flame into every heart around him and burn there. "Throw off the yoke, my children, the yoke that galls," he went on, "the hidden habit, the secret sins which, while you hate them, keep you their slave and degrade your manhood and womanhood. Come, brother, the earth is yours, the beautiful heavens, with its violet blue, its silvery sailing clouds, the meadows and fields of waving grain, its sunset at evening, when the day's work is ended. Yes, the earth is yours, my beloved brethren. The meek inherit the earth. A man doesn't have to die to lose his soul; ten to one men have bartered away their souls years before their death, and when the hour of death comes they cry in vain for their souls. What will a man give in return for his soul, the soul he has traded away for a few worldly honors?



A great many think we must wait until we die before gaining this blessing; the Bible says nothing about growing spiritually after death. Dear brethren, eternity is here, around and about us, we are living in eternity, the soul saved is the gift of eternal life from God. If we but pay the price for it we can have a taste of heaven here, a taste of its peace, rest and joy, which is a continual feast. 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest unto your souls.' "

When he ceased speaking many shouted and sang, many more wept and confessed their sins as they crowded about the altar. Gartha, having a long way to go, left as soon as the sermon was finished. When nearly all the people had gone, a woman, who had been kneeling in a corner near the altar, rose, came forward and threw herself at his feet, and covered her face with her thin, almost transparent, hands. She bent her tall, reed-like form until her head almost touched the floor. She wore a small, black bonnet, with its strings tied under her chin, and from it hung a long, black tissue veil. Wrapped about her shoulders was a heavy, old-fashioned, but exceedingly fine, broché shawl, what is called camel's hair, its rich colors were now faded, and in its best days it was used as a carriage wrap. Her whole body was wrenched and convulsed with sobs. "Oh," she cried, "this wonderful Jesus you speak of, dear sir, can it be when He takes possession of a man's heart He becomes like unto you. Oh, I ask you to pray for me, to this beautiful Christ, pray that He will give

me some of this love, some of this rest and peace you speak of. Oh, I pray Him to ease this aching, burning pain in my heart; ease this thirst, this consuming desire for revenge. Dear sir, I knew your face when you stepped upon the platform this evening. I saw it for the first time last May, when I took up my watch in the 'Market Place,' yes, as you passed in the crowd, about ten o'clock, I picked it out of all the faces of the men that came and went to and fro that night, and every night since then when I have taken up my watch under the shadow of the great window of the store, like a sleuth hound, looking, waiting and watching for one face, the face of the man to whom I gave up all that a woman holds dear and sacred. I flung away home, husband and child for him, and after giving him thirteen years of my young life, he deserted me, cast me aside, with as little thought as the young monsieur, who for ten minutes whirls *la petite grissette* in the dance at the *Jarden Mabile*.

"I have walked the city streets all day, from morning until dusk, in the broiling sun of summer, in the heat and dust, in the rain and mud, looking for him, and had I met him, I would have killed him. Oh, yes, dear sir. Two weeks ago, just at dark, I had walked all day, in the biting cold, in the snow and slush. I was on my way home to my little room, weary, worn, foot sore and bedraggled; I felt bitterly my humiliation and degradation, which added fuel to the flames of vengeance in my breast. Seeing the light and warmth in here, and hearing the sweet notes of the



organ, I knew it to be a place where some religious sect held their services. I thought I would go in and rest me. I dropped into a seat about the middle of the hall; some young girl with a soft voice sang a hymn; I sat for half an hour and the singing and praying went on; when I rose to leave I felt more at ease, more soothed and comforted. I happened to pass this way to-night, and something urged me to go in, and I sat on feeling restful and hating to leave; but I had just gotten up to go when you came up on the platform, and I seated myself again. Oh, help me, pray for me," she cried, "I have been a great sinner, for years I have lived in sin; I am an adultress, a wretched, unhappy woman; I would have died in my sins if it were not for you. The merciful and tender Jesus you tell of, will He forgive me and wash my sins away? I have never heard any one tell of Him as you have to-night; it is like some wondrous story that is lost to half the world. I used to hear my mother speak of Him, when a child; in after years, when His name was mentioned in my hearing, I only mocked and scoffed with others." She clasped his knees and kissed his feet.

He bent down, took her long, thin, white hands in his and lifted her up, and brushed back the waves of black hair from her temples. Her face was an interesting study to him, her great violet eyes, with their long, black lashes, a contrast to the marble-like whiteness of her cheek. She must have had an uncommon beauty, this woman, he thought, before sin and illness came to marr it; a dangerous beauty, a



strange mixture of the sensuous and intellectual, a pleasure loving nature, but weak morally.

So the reader can see why Cyrus Alvin captured the heart and soul of Annette Lefarge with his teaching. Since that fatal night long ago she knew men only as deceivers, traitors, lovers of self, slaves to their passions, seekers after all the allurements and devices which pander to and feed them. Love of woman was to them a thing apart, a pastime, when she ceased to amuse and gratify, she was flung aside for some fairer face. They would swear eternal fidelity, eternal love, one moment, only the next to betray with a Judas kiss. Former loves, old ties, old associations, were all lost sight of; it was always the face and the body of woman with the men she had known.

She had met, in the different cities of Europe, men of education, polished gentlemen of rank; she had seen them seated around the gaming tables in her own salon, as well as others, marked their faces flushed with wine and disfigured with jealous hate of the winners. She had seen English Lords and Earls, French Counts and foreign Ambassadors, rise from the midnight feast, totter home from their debauch, with mocking jibes upon their lips, only to grow drunk again, from the theft of a woman's virtue. These were the men she had known. She herself was sin steeped, her soul was sin stained; she had listened to the tempter's voice, and blinded by an unlawful, unholy passion, she threw away all that a woman holds dear, home, husband and child. But in all her mad revêls, her midnight feasts, which often lasted



until the break of morn, she was true to the man who pleaded with her to fly with him.

"It is late, madame ; I see the janitor is putting out the lights," said Cyrus Alvin, "wait a moment until I slip on my overcoat, and I will accompany you to your home." (Cyrus Alvin would go down into the gutter to lift a soul up out of the trough of sin.) As she led him along towards Eighth street, she made some apology about taking him to such a poor neighborhood, and a very poor place. "But my old negro maid will be waiting to receive me."

"Dear madame," he replied, "pardon me if I make the request to accompany you to-night to your very door, and when we reach there to expect you to ask me in. Look upon me as a physician, a surgeon, who has come across an interesting case, who has, as it were, taken his knife and probed deep into the sore, and must now apply the healing remedies."

She turned into the narrow alley which led to the rear of the old house. When she reached the stairs Aunt Louise stood at the head awaiting her. The old colored woman, perceiving she was accompanied by a gentleman, her dark face turned ashen. But as Cyrus Alvin came closer, following after Annette, and the dim light from the candle in the window fell upon his face, she surmised it was the minister she had heard her mistress speak of. Louise ushered Cyrus in with all the courtesy of the old time negro, reared in the old aristocratic families of the South. She gave him a chair and placed an old willow rocker for her mistress. There had been no change made in

the room, since the May evening the reader was first introduced to it, with the exception of the two chairs, which the old colored woman had bought at a second-hand store, and a little stove where a small coal fire burned.

The emotions which rose up in Cyrus Alvin's breast, when he entered the room, and beheld its extreme poverty, and its two strange occupants, mistress and maid, paled his cheek, and moistened his eyes. Being a Southern man himself, he knew just what social plane to place Annette upon, and of course the old black woman was a common thing in the South during slavery, and for some years after; but it was seldom any of the blacks were to be found so faithful under the trying circumstances of such extreme poverty. The old negress seated herself behind them, and with hands folded on her lap, her head bowed, she listened to her mistress relate the story of her life, from the day she married when nineteen or twenty years old, up to this very evening. And with half closed eyes she watched the quick changing color of Cyrus Alvin's face, that in the superabundance of her imagination, which belongs to the black race, she could liken it to no other than the face of Christ. It was twelve o'clock when Cyrus took leave of his new friends; Annette did not follow him to the door, being exhausted after the trying ordeal of living over again, as it were, the old life, its loves and passions, and dissipations; its sorrows and sufferings, its bitterness and hate. While Louise placed the candle in the window again and accom-



panied Cyrus out to the porch, Annette threw herself on the cot.

"I shall make it my business to-morrow to find your mistress a more comfortable room, and in a better locality," said Cyrus, as he stood at the head of the stairs. "Your mistress informed me she has no other means of support, but what you earn."

"No, sah, all de money an' all de great riches hab gone; afta Massa Count went away my Miss Annette she sole all her laces an' jewells, an' satins, an' furs an' velvets, an' de money she got fo' dem went to keep up de handsome apartments in Paris, waiten fo' Massa Count to come back, but he nebber did. She know no mo' about money an' its use, sah, den a baby, bekase Ise recon she alway hab so much. She hab nebber felt its want befo'. She hab nobody now to 'pend on but me, and as long as dese ole hans am able to wok, and Ise ken gits it to do, she won' stave, suah, sah."

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant," said Cyrus, quoting the saying of our Lord, "you are a brave, noble woman; you make my heart glad to see one of your race like you." He held out his hand to her. As she placed hers in his he slipped a five-dollar note in it. "Buy some delicacies for your mistress, and try and keep warm and comfortable, it is very cold." He bade her good night, went down the old rickety stairs, and out into the street.

He walked down to Sixth street and stopped a moment on the corner of Sixth street and the Avenue F. The night was intensely cold, before him lay the Mar-

ket Place, in deep shadow, and deserted by the crowd; not a light to be seen, but in a few of the drinkings Booths, which stood to the Fifth street side now called Broadway. To his left the smaller and dingier brick buildings, that crowd together and cluster about M street. Here are many saloons, and the men kept going in and coming out, and the street was not without its women stragglers, for these streets and the lateness of the hour have their own peculiar frequenters. He strode down to Broadway and stood on the corner of Broadway and M street from the Market Place, where Annette Lefarge months before, took her stand in the shadow of the window, of the great House of F. N. & Co., to watch and to wait and peer into every man's face who passed by. He stood out upon the pavement, where his eyes had a sweep of Broadway, clear to Pine street, its tall, whitish gray buildings looming up in the cold, bleak atmosphere of the night. The electric lights throwing long, inky-blue shadows across the snow-clad pavement. The men and women were more numerous here, even the bitter cold and the lateness of midnight was no barrier to these birds of prey; that awful sight to be met with in all large cities, and which appalls the thinking woman, when she comes to discover these strange phases of life and ask herself, "How can such things exist?" But they do exist, and no woman can take refuge behind the walls of her palatial home, her social position, and say, "Such conditions don't concern me." Ah, but they do, my dear sister, and soon or later they will reach



you, and strike at some tender spot, and you will cover your face with your white jewelled hands and weep over the beloved son or the beloved daughter, whom you have married to some other woman's son, without looking into his private character or morals.

"What a conversion, another Mary Magdalene," he said to himself, baring his head to the biting frost, and gazing up to the deep purple heavens, brilliant with its millions of shining stars, "she told me that for a whole year she had had murder in her heart, that the man she has been searching for is Charles ———, an American, but known in London and Paris, for thirteen years, as the Count de Gascon, and she his Countess. 'And that up to the night two weeks ago, when weary, worn and foot sore, she went into the Mission house and heard the singing and praying, and to-night when she heard me preach, that had she met him, no matter where or when, she would have killed him on sight. Oh, God, the Father, through thy Son, the Lord Christ,' he prayed, 'thou hast given me new-born to-night the soul of this woman. I give back again the prize to Thee, keep it I beseech Thee in Thy love and strength, for the span of her life is nearly run. Oh, gratification it is the death clutch of the human race, and this beautiful woman has been its greatest victim.'" He covered his head, looked fondly about the Market Place, his dream of a Christian Forum. He walked rapidly until he came to W avenue, where he took the cars for his home.

## CHAPTER II.

### HER WEDDING DAY.

“WHAT a beautiful letter it is,” said Gartha, handing the boldly written pages to Mary, “how strange that it should come on this day, my ‘wedding day.’ So many kind wishes and prayers for my future, yet dear, there is a ring of sadness in it; not that he speaks of his own sorrow, oh, no, Nelson is not that kind, besides he has the happy faculty of seeing things in their brightest aspect. And if they have a humorous side, he is sure to see it also, and present it in his own original way. Still, dear, I cannot help but feel that he is not over-joyous at my marriage with Arthur.”

She was seated beside the couch where Mary reclined in her room; it was early morning and nearing the close of May, the fairest month in all the fair year. And what can we say of it? Only that eye could behold its beauty, that mind can conceive of its hidden meaning, but that words would fail to paint nature in the dress she wore that day. The windows were open, and what streams of soft, liquid sunshine poured in; the air was filled with the songs of birds, and laden with the perfume of wild flowers, which



was wafted by the gentle winds, and fell about them like light, incense, and the melody of heaven.

"What strange beings men are," returned Mary, after reading the letter, and handing it back to Gartha, "no matter how good or how many noble qualities they may possess, there is still a selfishness lurking through it all. If they happen to have a strong friendship for a woman, especially if she is beautiful, they never like to lose her, nor feel that another man has more claim to her affections. And my brother is no exception to the rule."

"Nelson is quite an exception in this case, dear," replied Gartha, softly, "and he has especially charged me to take care of you and be with you as much as possible after Arthur and myself are married. Now, dear, I want to assist in dressing you this morning, then you can lie here quietly, until we return from church; Carl will then help you down to the sitting-room."

"Arminta can help me while you are all at church; she is quite handy about it; you will have no more than time to make your own toilet," she said, looking at Gartha with an expression in her face that told her there was no regret that she herself was not to be a bride.

"It is just a whim of mine, Mary, dear, and I would like you to humor me in it." And Gartha began to take from a drawer a dainty white wrapper and other articles of clothing.

Mrs. Lawrie had been busy for weeks, preparing for Gartha's marriage. Arminta flitted here and

there, as silent and mysterious as a ghost. All the rooms had been put in order by Gartha herself, and the studio, sitting-room and parlor were radiant with sunshine, blooming flowers and plants.

“Wal, if it weren’t for the great consideration I have for Garthe, I’d wear them anyhow,” said Peter, who was sitting in his shirt-sleeves on the side of the bed, in his room, and gazing fondly down at his garden shoes, and thinking of the distress a newer and smaller pair would give him. “If women want so eternally vain,” he muttered, laying one hand in the other, “there’d be some comfort in livin’. Susan, she’s jist as bad as the rest of them; she’s as proud as old Nick himself.” He looked down at his large feet, then at his barges of shoes. “If it weren’t for the great consideration I have for Garthe, I’d wear them anyhow, in spite of her; jist so, but I’d never hear the last about respect for myself and family, and other nonsense.”

“Father, aren’t you dressed yet, it’s nearly nine o’clock, and the company will soon begin to arrive?” said Mrs. Lawrie, breaking in on her husband’s reverie.

“Wal, let that thar curiosity of a gal intertain them, she’ll be amusement enough for them, until we finish our toilet. Blame me, mother, if she ain’t an evil sperit.”

“An evil spirit, Lord save us, Peter, what put that in your head?” exclaimed Mrs. Lawrie, looking at her husband in wonderment.

“It’s not in my head at all. I can see if my eyes are



a little weak, that she's an evil sperit, if ever there was one on this round globe," returned Peter, commencing to strap his razor, and do what he would, and try as he may, he could not get the strange Ar-minta, who impressed him with being all that was impish and mysterious out of his thoughts.

"I really believe, father, you are growing childish. I hoped when the spring came and you got out of your warm corner you would stop hatching strange notions," said Mrs. Lawrie, bursting one of the buttons of her dress, that was made a little too tight for the ample bosom, but it wouldn't bear squeezing, so pop went the button.

"Jist so, exactly, jist so," responded Peter, busily strapping away at his razor, "but if she ain't the blamedest, funniest specimen of a gal I ever beheld, Susan; a perfect harlequin of the lower regions." Here the razor stopped, the water trickled down his cheeks and one could hardly measure half an inch, between Peter's ears and his mouth, so wide was the gap.

"She is a splendid girl to work," answered Mrs. Lawrie, adjusting her glasses, as she seated herself to sew on the button that would much rather be fastened where it could rise and fall on her motherly bosom, than stowed away in a dark pocket of her work-basket. "Besides she is quite attentive to Mary, and very handy about waiting upon her."

"She's a sperit, Susan, as sure as you live she's a sperit. I never go into the sitting-room to read my paper, and chance to look up suddenly but I find her

behind my chair, or slipping around the room, as noiseless as a ghost, an' she'll disappear as mysteriously as she appeared."

"It's a notion of yours, Peter, she has a quiet way of going about the house, which I like, and perhaps she comes upon you unexpectedly," replied Mrs. Lawrie, who by this time had finished her dressing. As she stepped to go to the bureau glass to tie on her bonnet, she accidentally stumbled over her husband's garden shoes; she instantly stooped down, picked them up, and placed them in her closet, and turned the key in the lock, took the key out and dropped it into her dress pocket, tied her bonnet strings, and left the room. Peter, when through shaving, (for Peter carried his old-fashioned ideas so far as to shave himself,) and before making up his mind to renounce his garden shoes, went to the bedside to take a farewell look at them, and to his astonishment found them gone. He tried the door of his wife's closet, and found it locked.

"Wal," he exclaimed, gazing down at his slippers and wincing as he thought of his corns and bunions, "if she hasn't hid them; she never did have any confidence in me. Yes, jist so, blame me, if it weren't for Garthe, I'd break the lock and wear them in spite of her."

"Mother, dear, how lovely you look," said Mary, as Mrs. Lawrie entered her daughter's room. "How do you like my dress, my child?" she asked, standing over the couch with such benign tenderness in her face; she would not for worlds by a word, chase away



the bright smile that greeted her when she entered the door. And as she spoke one could detect now and then in the intonations of the deep, rich voice, that a sadness, we might say a great sorrow, lay hidden under her calm, resigned manner.

“Mother, dear, where did you get that lovely dress? I do not recollect ever seeing you wear it before; did you have it made new for Gartha’s wedding, or did you fish it up from the depths of those large closet drawers of yours? Oh, you’re a sly mother,” said Mary, with a loving smile.

“My child, I had this dress before you were born; you see, I had it made over for the wedding.”

It was a pearl gray silk trimmed at the neck and wrists, with some rare old point lace, which she had saved with other articles of apparel, for the daughter who was slowly passing away to that country where we are clothed in raiment not made by hands. Her bonnet was a delicate shade of lavender with gloves to match; these, with a white India crape shawl, worn over her shoulders, was another souvenir of her girlhood. She looked a dignified and elegant woman.

“And here is father; how kind of you both to think of me before going to the church,” and Mary turned her head aside, her whole weak body shaking with suppressed laughter, as her father, tall and gaunt, stood beside his wife the picture of despair, in his new suit of broadcloth, and contemplating his new silk hat, which he held out at arm’s length, so that his daughter could have a full view of it.

“Wal, Mary, I don’t mind dressing up, but your

mother is so eternally vain, Christianity and all, she's as proud as the old Nick himself, and that's what sunk him, pride. And if it weren't for your's and Gartha's sake, I'd have broken the lock and worn them in spite of her."

Peter gazed down at his new shoes in a most doleful way. Mrs. Lawrie had moved to the other side of the room, and stood before a window with her back to her husband, her mouth working, her ample bosom shaking, until the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I am so glad to see you in your best clothes, father. Gartha, I am sure, will be delighted to think you had such a lovely outfit made for her wedding." This made Peter forget his misery, and his obstinacy, for Peter was as obstinate as a mule, especially with his wife, and wedded to his ways.

"Wal, if it pleases you, my daughter, to see me dressed in good clothes; if I have made you happier by wearing them," he said, laying his hat on a chair that stood near her couch, and reaching over his long bony hand, he took hers between his two large palms, (there was a sort of pathos in his awkwardness), "I'm compensated and if in the future there is anything that I can do to please you, let mother know, an' I'll do it as well as I know how." Peter's voice took a softness that sounded even strange to himself, as he laid his daughter's hand back on the coverlet, as carefully as if he thought any jar might break it.

"You always have made me happy, you dear old father, and I am sure you have made mother su-



premely happy this morning, and knowing this, it should make you feel very comfortable."

"Come, Peter, it is time we were going," said Mrs. Lawrie, turning around and wiping her tears from her eyes, not of laughter now, but of sadness.

A few seconds after Mrs. Lawrie and Peter left their daughter's room, Gartha entered it arrayed in her bridal robes. "Oh, how beautiful you look, my Gartha; you resemble some white-robed angel of the dawn. What would Carrie Van Court say if she could see you now? Poor Carrie," and Mary sighed.

"The dear child," said Gartha, kneeling beside the couch, "I suppose I would lead her fancy a dance, if she were here this morning."

"You would be queen of the apple blossoms, to her, they are so suggestive of purity," said Mary, laying her hand in Gartha's.

"Oh, my Mary, if you say these things there is danger of making me vain. I am but a poor, weak woman, so very weak, dear, that I fear the life which is now opening up to me, may be too luxurious, it may choke and crowd out my aspirations for the work I feel has been laid out for me to do. Still I am very happy, dear, it is my wedding day. You and I have so often spoken of our love, that you well know the depth and strength of mine for Arthur; yet, dear, I would feel a thousand times more blessed, if I could bring you back to health, so that you might live for your father and mother, and Carl." Gartha turned her face away, and laid her arm under the dear head.

“All that has passed for me, the battle has been fought and won, and a sweet peace, such as this world cannot give is mine. I am now happy in the thought, that I have been spared to see this day, your wedding day. So bright that not a speck must be seen on its clear sky, not a passing shadow mar the perfection of its loveliness.” Gartha bent over and kissed her, then rose and left the room.

Gartha found Arthur awaiting her in the lower hall. He held out both hands as he advanced to meet her. It was then, and only then, that she ever remembered seeing his eyes rest upon her with great tenderness, admiration and love. Her dress was a white princess robe of soft India silk, and seemed to be moulded to her tall, lithe figure, so like a willow in its subtle grace. It was made with a plait that began at the back of the neck, and swept off in long shimmering folds to the ground, forming a train, that looked like the foam of sea waves. There was lace at her throat, lace at the wrists of the closely fitting sleeves, and orange blossoms never crowned a fairer brow, and her veil which floated about her like a cloud of white haze, never shaded eyes where the light of the soul shone forth more radiantly.

“Come,” she said, taking Arthur’s arm, “we have a few moments to spare; let us go to the back of the house; I long to take one more look at the landscape before we are married.”

Never was nature in a more lovely mood. Beautiful in stretches of wavy curves, lay the undulating meadows, like a rolling sea of greenish gold; the hills



in their soft verdure rising, falling, and sloping away in an indescribable violet haze. Tall trees illumined by the sun, and glistening against a sky dotted with clouds of silvery fleece, floating and melting into its mellow azure blue. Near them lay the orchard, white and redolent in their blossoming fruit; and where they stood, one tree shed its pure scented bud-leaves at their feet. At their back the bottom lands swept off to the shining river, and the road which wound from the gate along its bank was perfumed with daisies, daffodils and violets. Gartha stood in the midst of all this creative life, this expanding bud and bloom, like some white robed Seraphim, the sunlight falling about her, falling upon them both. But those far-seeing eyes of hers, as they gaze on the scene, get no glimpse of the future, nor of the shadows which cross the path she is now going to take. She saw before her only nature's voluminous book, whose pages she read, and felt more than the beauty of their subtle meaning and lessons.

Arthur Lowell stood beside her, elegant in his attire, Apollo-like in his bearing, his liquid brown eyes resting tenderly upon her. But did he see the things that she did; did his eyes drink in all the charm and delight of the glorious spring morning, with its fragrant breath fanning their cheek, the air filled with the songs of birds, and bright with the hues of thousands of flowers? Did his soul go out in response to that living spiritual essence, that something unspeakable, which she felt, yet could find no words to define? No, Arthur Lowell neither saw,



understood nor felt these things, the landscape was fair and beautiful to him, in its outward sense, so was his bride, fairer at that moment to him than any other being, or thing on earth. Her beauty pleased and charmed him, and he loved her as much as he was capable of loving any woman. Oh, love, sweet, holy love, softening influence of our days, rare treasure of our youth, but, alas, how you mock us, as the autumn of our lives draws near; you gather up your pearls, pearls that you have strewn at our feet, as plentiful as the dew on June roses, then you fly away, and leave us to starve; for you there is only youth and spring.

A little later Arthur Lowell and Gartha Rowland stood before the altar of the small chapel on the hill, where a select party of friends had been invited, and this old church was where she herself had requested her marriage to take place. Hand in hand they stood, plighting their vows before God, the sunbeams streaming and glinting through the stained glass windows, wrapping them in a gold embroidered mantle. There was no music but that which came from the songs of the birds outside, the birds she loved so well. And Carl on hearing her favorite, the brown thrush's silvery warbling, looked about the pew as if for something, it was his flute. And as the minister, a low-voiced man of God, spoke the words, "Until death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance," Gartha's hand trembled in Arthur's and there passed over her whole body a sensation as if her blood was freezing to ice; it was but momen-



tarily, however. Hand in hand they left the church, followed by their friends. As the carriages in which the bridal party rode came in sight of Tanglewood, it seemed to Gartha that she had never remembered seeing it when it appeared to her so heavenly a spot. The south side of the old house was bathed in a flood of sunshine, while the front and north side nestled in the cool shade of its great trees. The gay morning glories climbed up about its porches, its stately oaks and pines cast slanting, dark shadows on the velvet green sward, sprinkled with golden buttercups.

The company assembled on the front porches and some took seats under the trees; Gartha stood on the porch beside her bridesmaid, a pale, intellectual girl, and Gartha thought as she caught a glimpse of Peter, who was standing near his wife, that she had never seen him when he presented such a good appearance. Indeed he looked quite distinguished in his black suit, his white vest, and white hair, and rose nearly a head over all the men present; besides being as straight as an Indian. Carl had also donned a new black suit made for the occasion, the tailor having been given strict orders to make it loose and comfortable. Arthur had invited some of his intimate gentlemen friends, and a few of the professors from the Academy and University. Gartha had invited some of her young friends, and Mrs. Lawrie some of her old ones. After a little while Gartha led Arthur up stairs to Mary's room; they found Carl there and Mary seated in her chair already dressed.

She held out both arms to Gartha and greeted Arthur as he entered with a smile that lingered for weeks after in Gartha's memory. Gartha knelt down beside her and as she took the long, white fingers in hers she kissed her many times on cheek and brow. After a few moments she went with them down to the sitting-room, where Arminta had her own easy chair, arranged with pillows and soft cushion to receive her. Carl seated himself beside her, and her father, watching his opportunity, angled through the company, which had all gathered into the house for refreshments, captured a chair and seated himself on the other side, opposite Carl. All the friends were untiring in their attentions to her; they had heard of her great musical talent, her long engagement to Mr. Goetz, and her patient, gentle nature, and said among themselves: "What a pity that one so young and gifted should be fast fading away."

Arthur's groomsman, a handsome young artist, with all the gush and enthusiasm of one fresh from Paris, bent over her chair to tell her he had met Nelson, her brother, in Paris, several times before he left Europe for his own country. He made himself quite interesting by relating some anecdote of Nelson. "You have no idea how it improves an artist to go to Paris," he said, sipping his coffee.

"Nelson is one of the young men who go abroad to see what other men have done, and are doing, but have too much originality to become simply an imitator," said Gartha, who happened to be standing at Mary's left.



“Oh, ah,—yes, really, Mrs.—Mrs. Lowell, but you know we are so apt to get swamped by greater minds.” The young artist bowed, took another sip of coffee, and made way for two old ladies that came to say to Mary they were pleased to see her down stairs.

“Father, what amuses you so much?” asked Mary, who observed Peter’s restlessness, his squirming about in his chair, and every once in a while crossing and recrossing one leg over the other.

“Wal, Mary,” he said, bending low and placing his face close to hers, “do you see anything that strikes you as being remarkably funny? I know if Nelson war here and you war like your old strong self, thar’d be no end to the goin’s on, the sharp an’ witty sayin’s, between yourself and him; all at the expense of that gal. For if she ain’t the blamedest, funniest, curiosity of a gal, I ever beheld.” The water ran from Peter’s eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, and his mouth—well there is no knowing where it would have stretched to if his ears had not interposed. And all this was caused by Arminta who was passing coffee to the guests; flitting in and out with creams, ices and cakes, as softly and silently as a mouse, but as quick as a cat, for she seemed to be at every one’s side at the same time, and outdid the professional colored young man as a waiter. But Arminta was certainly, as Peter termed her, a curiosity, and would have attracted any one’s attention, who had the gift of observing character, and a touch of the humorous, as Peter and his children possessed to a great degree. Arminta’s hair was jet black, and when in its natural

state looked as if it was nibbled by rats, it was so dry and chippy, but of course Arminta wanted to look as nice as possible on Gartha's wedding day, and she put an extra touch to her bang by frizzing it. So it fell over her black brows in short, frowzy curls, from which her small bead-like eyes peered out; the rest of her face resembling a little russet apple. But Arminta was as neat as a new blue calico dress, long white apron, white collar and a red bow of ribbon in the braid of her hair could make her.

It was late in the afternoon when Gartha and her husband left Tanglewood for their own cottage. As they stood in its parlor, furnished in blue and gold, the soft scented breeze stealing through the lace curtains, she said, laying her lovely head on his shoulder:

"Oh, my husband, is this beautiful home to be mine? Is this why you wished me not to come here until our wedding day? Oh, dear, I shall be so happy here; happy in the morning when going to your work the work that is so sweet to the worker, that he may leave behind him the fruits of his labor. Thrice happy when you return at even-tide, oh, so happy in your presence, blest in your home, a woman's kingdom."

Oh, fate, oh, destiny, who of us can turn aside from it? Prate as we may, it is inevitable. He took her hand in his and they went out to the front piazza and stood a moment, with their faces turned towards Tanglewood. Peacefully it nestled among the trees, the oaks and pines, softly swaying in the reflected



light of great sweeps of illumined clouds, which gathered towards the west, and fell around and about them like a shower of golden mist. Gartha heard the brown thrush's liquid notes, and the strains of Carl's flute were wafted to her ear. She turned her gaze and pointed towards the little church, where that morning she was made a wife; long, slanting sun rays fell across its vine-covered sides, tingeing the leaves to a burnished green, and gilding its steeple. "There is a subject for a sketch," she said, and again the solemn words rang in her ear, "Until death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PEACE THAT PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.

AFTER Gartha's marriage Mary failed rapidly, the day of the wedding was the last time she had been down stairs. The family physician had consulted with other family physicians, and the verdict was nothing could be done to save her. The disease was a slow consumption of the liver, a failing of all the digestive organs to do their proper work; therefore no assimilation of food; and most all nutrition had ceased. Gartha was seldom absent from her bedside. After Arthur left in the morning, she would take her sewing, embroidery, or a book, and go to Tanglewood for the day; returning to her own home towards evening, before Arthur came to dinner. After dinner she and her husband would visit the cottage together, where they generally found Carl seated at the sick girl's bed. Carl would give his seat to Gartha, go down stairs to the front porch, where he and Arthur would enjoy a quiet smoke, while they conversed of different things; the failures, successes, and ups and downs of life. Every afternoon since Nelson's departure found Carl at the cottage; sometimes he would bring his work in the morning and remain all day, as he had Nelson's studio all to himself.



This gave the lovers a chance to be much together in the last three months before Mary took to her bed. She would take her old place on the lounge and watch Carl paint, which was her custom with her brother; often suggesting little improvements in the arrangement of drapery, or slight touches here and there, which would make a vast difference for the best, in the expression of a feature, or the whole face. These were happy days, to both, days that Carl lived over and over again, when the gentle girl had been laid to rest. They were days that were the solace of his lonely after years. These days come to most of us at some period of our lives; their memory clings to us, as the tender green moss does to the bark of the oak; they brighten the hours of our autumn, which are often clouded with the shadows of coming winter.

One morning, it was in the early spring, before Gartha's marriage, the blue-bird's sweet note and robin's song had been heard in the trees, the air was soft and warm, and filled with the fragrance of opening bud and leaf. Mary reclined on her couch in the studio, Carl, who was at work on the portrait of a lady, rose and laid aside his palette and brushes and seated himself at her side. "Poor hand," he said, taking the long wasted fingers in his, "but I think you are better, dear, the doctor says this last medicine is helping you." She turned to him, and the smile that beamed from her eyes shone with a spiritual radiance; always conscious of her plainness, there was something of late in the expression of her face and especially at this moment which made it

appear beautiful to him. "You have not forgotten, dear, that night last June," she said, "you remember, you spoke of its wonderful loveliness. It was a night, dear, when the heavens seemed to come down to the earth, and the earth go up to the heavens; a night full of the splendor of the moon, full of color, of melody, of blooming life, light, joy and love. You remember the vows we plighted then, Carl dear; that if anything should happen to prevent us from being united on earth, that we were still bound together for all time and eternity."

"Oh, my life, my love, you are mine for all time and eternity," he said, with bowed head.

"I have long known, dear Carl,—" she hesitated, seeing that her words gave him pain, "that dear as we are to each other, and as much as I love you, Carl, I cannot be your earthly bride, but in spirit I shall ever be with you, ever beside you, leading you upward and onward, until your time comes to follow me. And up there, dear, in the life beyond, it will be heart to heart, and soul to soul."

"My love, my fond and gentle Mary, my bride, my wife," he said, folding her to his breast, for they had both risen, "Don't you think a change would help you? The spring is here and the warm days will soon be upon us, to go east might renew your strength. I have a friend of my mother's a distant cousin living on the Hudson river; she is my god-mother, and a maiden lady of means. She has a fine place there, we could marry and go to her home for the summer. I know she would welcome us. I used to be a great



favorite with her when a boy and I have had many letters from her asking me to come and spend months with her, which I have never taken advantage of."

"Oh, darling," she said, with eye-lids half closed, her face pale, "I love you, but there is no place where I can be more comfortable than home here with mother. Oh, Carl, I would have you lay aside any hope that might deceive you, for every day I find myself drawing nearer to the land where there is no death nor decay."

"Then, you are happy in leaving me?" he said, in a low whisper.

"No, dear, I would be so happy to remain with you, for it would make you happier, and your life more complete; but since it cannot be, darling, we must look to an eternal union beyond. You will comfort mother and father, when I am gone; and it must make no difference in your coming and going here; let this be your home as it is now. No, dear, I am not unhappy in going to Him who has called me; who has sent His messengers at night, to whisper holy things to me; words of peace, the peace that passeth all understanding; messengers pointing upward, onward, and beyond, until I reach the gate, which stands wide open to receive me." Her head lay on his shoulders, his lips pressed hers, he held her close to his deep, heaving breast, held her long and tenderly, held her until she seemed to gather strength from his warmth and vitality.

When Mary took to her bed, and her mother found

she refused all solid food as it gave her great pain to touch it, and she grew weaker every day, she knew then there was no hope of her daughter's recovery. Only once did she give way to the deep grief that was gnawing at her heart strings. One morning she had prepared some chicken broth and a few oysters; she had wiped the oysters perfectly dry, dipped them in cracker rolled as fine almost as flour, and browned them in a hot pan with the least sign of butter, and carried the oysters and soup on a silver salver up to Mary, who had not touched solid food of any kind for three days, excepting the tablespoonful of sherry, varied now and then with one of beef tea. "I would like you to eat one of these oysters, Mary, dear, if it is only one, Mary, they are very palatable, not a bit rich, and so easy to digest. And a little of the soup, Mary, just to please me, Mary, dear."

"You good mother, you dear mamsy, I would eat a whole can full to please you, if I could," said Mary, picking up one of the oysters on her fork, and putting it to her lips. Her mother kept urging her to take a few spoonfuls of the soup, but it was of no use, Mary shook her head and looked appealingly at her mother.

Peter happened to be in the sitting-room when his wife passed through with the salver to the dining-room, and for the first time in many years he saw tears coursing down his wife's cheeks. She never turned her head towards where he was seated, but went on and laid the salver on the dining-room table. "Wal," he thought, when she did not return, "this



will be the hardest blow of all to her, and to Peter it will not be easy,—yes, exactly jist so,—yes, the hardest blow of all,” he said, wiping the tears that coursed down his wrinkled cheeks.

Why was it that Peter observed these tears of his wife now, more than when his other children closed their eyes to the light of this world, to awaken in the light of some other sphere? Was it because he thought more of this youngest and only remaining daughter? She had touched a deep, tender spot in his heart, the key-note to his better self. He was a selfish man given to thinking of himself, to mourning over his pains, aches and failures. Conscious to a certain extent of his own drawbacks, and that his peculiarities which were part of his strength, were at the same time a hindrance to the things he wished to accomplish. Or would he by taking himself to task try to correct one of them, as he was wedded to his ways, and to indulge them at times, was a luxury. He felt keenly the death of his other four children, and he did the best he knew for his family; but so long as things went easy, with little anxiety on his part, with no breaks in the regularity of his daily life, and like most men of his kind, so long as the machinery of his household was kept well oiled, what else was there to do? For over forty years his wife had ministered to his creature comforts, and in all that time he had never shown her any of those little attentions and considerations which smooth the rough edges of a humdrum existence, which necessarily comes from the care and responsibility of a

large family. His wife had borne her aches, pains and burdens, apart from him, and if he had any sympathy with her he had a poor way of showing it. He sat in his chair over an hour, which was something unusual for him to do of a summer morning, for Peter was no idler; then he rose and went to his wife's room, opened the door softly and looked in. She was kneeling by the bed, her head bowed in prayer, he closed the door, as softly as he had opened it, went out to the garden to hoe his beets and potatoes. There was something heroic and sublime in the humility of that kneeling mother, over whose head nearly sixty years had spent their course. Mother of sons and daughters, that had one by one been called to the other side of the great river of eternity; and now in her old age, this best beloved of all, this gifted girl, was fast passing away; how she cried in the anguish of her heart, "Not mine, but Thine will be done. For Thou doest all things well."

Gartha had written to Nelson of his sister's expected death; he had been for some months cognizant of her extremely delicate health, as it was often the theme of Gartha's letters. His mother had also written him, telling him of his sister's wish that he might be with her before the final parting. "She may linger on a month or two, and she may pass away in a few days; if you think you can reach home in time come immediately." Nelson had come from Berlin to Paris the evening before the word came, intending to while away a month or so there before going to London, where he expected to remain dur-



ing the winter. On receipt of his mother's letter, he set sail for home.

One evening, a week before Mary's death, Gartha was seated by her bedside, the lamp burned low on a small stand back of the bed; Carl had left her side but a few moments before, and had gone out to the porch; the last two weeks he had given up work, and night and day watched by her couch, until relieved by her mother or Gartha."

"How kind of you, dear," she said, reaching out her hand to Gartha. "I cannot tell you how happy your presence makes me, and how restful I feel when you are sitting near me. I am very selfish, am I not?"

"You are far from being selfish; I am proud and overjoyed to know that my presence adds comfort and rest to the few short days you are to be with us," replied Gartha, pressing the white fingers that laid on the coverlet.

"How often and often, in the past we have spoken and speculated on things spiritual," continued Mary, speaking low, "but what was dim and vague to me then is now as clear as the noon-day sun. The mist has dispersed, the veil has been lifted a moment, so that now and then I get a glimpse of the land of the blessed, which many think so far away, when it is right around us. It is only my body that lies here, my spirit roams at will. Sometimes I am down stairs with mother,—dear mother,—then with father in the garden,—then again I am sitting at the piano with Carl at my side, playing our favorite airs, from the

operas and symphonies. And what would have taken months of practice when in my health, I can read now at a glance. How my fingers fly over the keys, how my soul thrills with their new meaning and beauty. Then sometimes I am soaring with the birds in the blue ether, flying up, up, and off, off, into space; and, oh, Gartha, if I could then pen my thoughts and the things I feel and see, what a book they would make. Then at times I am lying under the trees, and what hymns they sing to me, as the warm winds play softly through their leaves and gently sway their branches; and oh, what poems I read in the weird sougning of the pines. Then like a sweet interlude comes the rippling notes from the little throat we both love so well, the brown thrush. And often I see a face rise before me, oh, my Gartha, what can I say of it, dear—words are too feeble to convey any idea of the beauty of His countenance, so radiant, so tender and loving. And He beckons me to follow Him upward and onward and beyond. Yes, dear, it is only the body that lies here.” She sighed, and crossed her hands over her bosom.

“Only the body,” said Gartha, whose clear vision beheld and felt all her friend had spoken of, “but tell me, dear, when you pass to the country where only the holy dwell, if you are permitted to return, will you come to me, come at morn, at noon, and when I shall most miss you, at sunset, and the twilight glow of evening. Oh, my friend, my sister, there may come a time when I shall long to feel your presence, when my eyes shall try to pierce the veil, which hides



spirit from matter; and I will stretch out my arms and cry, "Oh, for a cool breath, for a touch, a sign, that I may know you are near me. I am very happy now, dear, in Arthur's love, but that time may come." Gartha rose and moistened the invalid's lips with a spoonful of wine; Carl then came in and took Gartha's place at her bedside.

Gartha, on going down stairs, found her husband and Mrs. Lawrie on the porch; Peter had drawn his chair to the far end, out of the way of the light which came from the hall lamp, and seated himself in the shadow of a corner. He looked so woe-begone and so forsaken that Gartha went to him and laid her hand caressingly on his shoulder.

"Wal, blame me, Garthe, if I didn't think you war that evil sperit out thar, you came upon me so suddenly," he said, somewhat startled at her appearance. "I suppose you've jist came from the room above. I needn't ask any questions; I know she's passing away, Garthe, an' in a little while she'll be gone, gone from mother an' me an' the old home. Yes, exactly jist so," and Peter tried to choke down something that had risen in his throat. "But she seemed very comfortable a while ago when I war up thar; but, Garthe, it almost broke my heart, the way she looked at me, when I asked her if thar was anything she could think of that I could do to please her. An' Garthe, I was never so worked up in all my life, as when she smiled an' said, "No, dear father, nothing now; an' I should like you to bear in mind, after I'm

gone, that I never remember the time when you didn't do everything to please me."

"But I haven't, Garthe," here Peter nearly choked with the lump that rose up in his throat. "I think if I'd taken a little more notice of her, an' the boy across the water,—if I had a little more, wal I suppose you'd call it appreciation of their talents,—if I'd made a little more effort to help them along, I'd have liked it better now, Garthe; I meant to have done it. I wanted them to be good children, an' grow up to be good men an' women, an' I thought all the other things was foolishness an' vanity. Wal, Garthe, I've always been such a blunderer, besides an old man set in his habits, an' wedded to his ways, can't keep pace with the smart young folks of the present."

"I am afraid, Mr. Lawrie, you take these things too much at heart," said Gartha.

A lovely June twilight had faded and deepened into just such a night as the spring before when Carl and Mary sat on the front porch plighting their vows. Through the windows of the room streamed the pale light of the moon, a fit semblance of the spirit of the dying girl. Her mother stands beside her bed, with bowed head; Peter stands at the foot dressed in his best suit, the one he wore at Gartha's wedding; he had put it on every morning for three days, also his best shoes, and when the hour came to climb to her room, to pay her a visit he carried his new high hat in his hand, (so the reader may guess what tortures



he underwent to please this beloved daughter). Carl leans against the window, with head bowed on his chest, he is very pale, and every little while his eyes wander about in search of something, but finding no outlet for his feelings his broad chest heaves and great sighs escape with each long breath, while he runs his hands again and again through his bristling hair. Gartha and Nelson stand to one side, Nelson has improved much since his absence; he is full of grief at the coming loss of his sister, the companion of his childhood, the sharer of his troubles, hopes and aspirations, and the lonely days that must follow. The dying girl opens her eyes, she asks for Carl, he bends low to catch her words: "Your flute, dear, play me one last song, 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' but first raise me up, place your arm under my head." Her head rests on his shoulder. "For all time and eternity," she whispered.

"For all time and eternity, my life, my love, my Mary, my wife."

He lays her head back on the pillow. They bring his flute, his face has the whiteness of marble, as he holds the instrument tremblingly to his lips. Then faintly, faintly, like the rippling of some far-off rivulet winding its way through dewy banks, decked with the white and purple hyacinth, sweetly, sweetly, like the breath of a holy prayer. Then higher, and higher, it ascends, then lower, lower, Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee, softly, softly dies away on the air.

Thus did Mary pass to the other shore, thus was

her spirit wafted nearer, nearer to Him who gave it. Thus in the bright morning they laid her to sleep in the warm earth ; never in life were the calm, still features so beautiful as now with the peace that passeth all understanding.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GATHERING OF A DARK CLOUD.

It is a year and a half since Mary Lawrie was laid to rest under the cedars in the little cemetery on the hill. After her daughter's death, Mrs. Lawrie took up her daily routine of household cares and duties; she had been a busy woman all her life, and idleness to her meant utter demoralization; to give up and nurse her grief, would have been to have taken to her bed and died. She had her husband and her son to live for still, and often the old thought would intrude itself upon her, and more than ever since Mary had been laid away; the thought which used to haunt her, before the professor began to come to Tanglewood. That if the fates had been more kind she might have had Gartha for a daughter-in-law. In the year and a half past, her face has lost none of its old time sweetness, but added to it is an expression of resigned sadness, and her head is crowned with a halo of hair as white as snow drifts. Yet when Nelson gets on one of his strings, which he often does, his flashes of wit come thick and fast, "smart sayins," as Peter termed them, she looks over her spectacles, with the same merry twinkle in her brown

eyes, as in former days, before the last great sorrow fell to her.

Arminta disappeared as mysteriously as she came, but not without robbing Mrs. Lawrie of all her daughter's clothing, and the contents of her large linen closet, which was packed with the finest of bed and table linen; nor could the police ever find tale or tidings of her.

Peter plods on in the old way; he is always busy in his garden, hoeing and caring for his vegetables, cutting and pruning his fruit-trees and fruit. His old garden shoes and hat, which were laid aside to please the beloved daughter, as she took leave of him, to wing herself off with the angels, were never put on again; he wears a large brimmed straw one now, that protects his head from the sun. The change which took place in Peter, with Mary's death, has steadily improved with the year and a half that has past, he is very thoughtful of his wife's comfort, and has grown more comfortable himself; has even taken to smoking a pipe. There were a few months after Mary died that he took little or no interest in any of his former pursuits, he dressed himself every morning in his black broadcloth suit, and wandered aimlessly about the house and grounds with his hat in his hand, and walking for hours in the garden; then he would come back to the cottage exhausted, and throw himself into a chair, and try to read his paper. One morning his wife woke up and found him gone from her side, she rose quickly and went to her bed-room



window, looked out, and to her surprise and relief, saw him dressed in his old garden clothes and hard at work. She hastened to Nelson's room and awoke him, told him that a great weight had been lifted from her mind, that his father had gone back to his work, which was a good sign, and that he was at that moment in the garden busy with his pease and strawberries.

"Oh, I knew he would, mother, and my plan has been the best, to let him have his way," was Nelson's reply.

Carl makes the cottage his home, he occupies the room his beloved died in. Every morning he goes to the city, returning to Tanglewood about five in the afternoon, and his work grows in favor each year. After Mary's death, every evening during the summer months, he would walk towards the cemetery, and after the lapse of an hour or so those at the cottage would hear the strains of the flute, and the sweet notes of "Nearer, My God to Thee; Nearer to Thee," wafted on the soft winds to their ears. Artists are not given so much to jealousy as men in other professions, unless those who have no claim to the name. So Nelson's comrades did not turn green with envy at the work he turned out. There was a little complaining at first, that he had had so many more advantages than they; but his paintings were so fine, so original in handling and in depth and breadth, so full of inspiration, that the boys were all glad to learn from him. Besides he was such a generous fellow, ready at all times to help his brother artists

with his knowledge, and his purse, if necessary. His reputation grows yearly, and he is considered by all who take interest in such matters, to be one of the rising young painters of America. Yet, while Americans are willing enough to recognize merit and give praise, they are slow to patronize their own country's talent. Still, as nothing is gained without toil and patience, Nelson works on with the hope and buoyancy which is the inheritance of the young and enthusiastic.

Arthur Lowell has become head of the Academy, with a corps of teachers under him. In the early days of his marriage, his wife tried to help him with her abundant ideas, but they did not always see alike, nor agree on art matters. Gartha did not advance what might be termed opinions, but in the conversation which would naturally arise between them, she full of ideas, he intellectual in a sense, but more on the mechanical order, his knowledge being other men's knowledge; while her thoughts would flow like a clear crystal stream. He would listen to them with polite attention, yet at the same time he treated them with a coldness and indifference that fell on her heart like ice. After her friend's demise, Gartha and her husband went abroad for a three months' tour; these were happy days to Gartha, days that even in her highest flights into dream-land, she never expected to see or feel. To be sailing in a gondola around lovely, historic Venice, to be sauntering about Rome, spending hours in St. Peter's and studying the work of the generations of dead and gone artists and archi-



fects, was new food to a mind which was ever seeking knowledge. She threw about everything she saw her rich imagination; and when she beheld for the first time those grand Greek gods and goddesses, she thought her companion, her newly made husband, must have descended from them, come down from a long line of ancestors, each growing more refined, until he stood beside her in his God-like beauty.

Yet Gartha was no sensuous dreamer; still there was enough of the sensuous in her nature to soften and blend with her intellect and ideality. Life to her was serious, it meant work to be up and doing. When Arthur and she returned to their own country they settled down in their cozy house on the hill, which she beautified with her own hands, until it seemed like a fairy palace. After this she wanted to assist her husband in his school; could she write his lectures? She knew it would help him; she did write one, and read it to Nelson, who pronounced it good. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her that Professor Lowell would never read it to his pupils, but he stopped short and sighed, remembering that Arthur was now her husband, and said, that she herself should have been an artist.

Arthur Lowell was one of those men who could not bear a woman to think she could in any way lead him; that her intellect, although of a different kind, could help or give stimulus to his. In the first five or six months of their marriage he humored his wife in many of her undertakings, only to kill them before half accomplished, by cool, stinging sarcasms, which

bit deep into the heart, and stifled aspiration. As the days went by, he gave her to understand that it was his wish that she should pay more attention to society, to entertaining of his friends, the people he invited to his house; the wives and daughters of the professors of the great institution of learning, to which the Art Academy was annexed. And they were all members of that church, whose religion was founded on the broad and liberal principles of being one with the Father. But Gartha at this time was not in harmony with what they termed broad and liberal principles; broad and liberal she was, for a woman of her years, but as she said to Nelson Lawrie: "Faith was a light given to but few." And great faith was hers, it was the strongest element in her nature. It was this faith that gave her strength, to quaff the bitter cup, when offered, and drink to its very dregs; and afterwards walk steadily on and up the mountain steeps, carrying others with her. Oh, beautiful faith!

When she came to learn that her husband's desire was that she should go more in society, and also entertain more, certainly, she thought, she would be delighted to meet and converse with these learned men and their wives and daughters; it was just the thing, and would open up the life she had been reaching out to. She would form a coterie of women, and have her social gatherings, and her informal at homes, which would be the ideal exponent of herself. They would converse of books and paintings, science and art, the philosophy and beauty of the spiritual



life. And she would open up her mind, and plans for future work, and she was sure she would find many who would be in sympathy with her.

But Gartha found in her gatherings that the conversation invariably drifted into the most commonplace little gossipings about this and that. One day she said to a rich lady, that she was very much interested in the education of children, her dream was to build a home, a great institution for girls and boys. Not a charity place, for the word charity to her, unless for each other's faults, had a blighting effect on her. "It chills me to the marrow," she said, with a quiver of the lip. "I mean a home in every respect, where girls can be taught the art of housekeeping, a system of economy, to cook food plainly and palatably, and serve it daintily; and out of little to make home attractive and beautiful; and above all, how to become good wives and mothers. Then we would soon have no use for jails and prisons."

The rich lady said she would speak to a gentleman who knew all about mission schools and asylums; but the gentleman thought Mrs. Lowell's scheme visionary and impracticable.

Gartha looked in vain for the congenial friends, the kindred spirits, to whom it would be a pleasure and delight to converse with, to open her heart to, and pour out the abundance of her ideas. She found that those she came in contact with, with the exception of some few, that their minds did not run in the same channel with hers; they did not care to listen to ideas, they were too much interested in themselves;

in their small affairs of every day; and never having gotten out of their own little narrow rut, they were not conscious of their barrenness of mind. So she felt herself shut in, dammed up, as it were, by icebergs; how could she speak her thoughts to those who never think; to those who had nothing in common with her? They did not understand her, so to protect themselves, they resented her superiority, by saying she was so very odd and queer. So the days passed and instead of the great results which she hoped to achieve as time went by, it was taken up by trifles, small teas and dinner parties, going to this entertainment and that. It was only when she went to Tanglewood, and had long talks with Mrs. Lawrie, and spent an hour or two in the studio with Nelson and Carl, that the old enthusiasm for work revived the heart's desire to accomplish something, and be of use to others. She would often ask herself if the old ideal days would ever return again. Alas, no. Mary, the beloved companion of her girlhood, was gone, and she belonged to another, and that other was her husband, and he had it in his power to make or to mar her life.

Arthur Lowell loved power too well to ever relinquish one atom of it to his wife. The sense of it was so great in him that even to bend for a moment the will of a child to his, gave him keen satisfaction. The boy of fifteen, who dared to resist his commands whetted his appetite to such an extent that he never gave him up until he was like dough in his hands, and he could knead him to any shape. A petty



power, you say, but to equal it, to combat it, one would have to fight with Arthur's weapons: indifference, selfishness and a hard dominant nature. The tender blossom of the fruit has no protection against the cruel frost that blights it before maturity. Can we wonder, then, that Gartha cried in the secret of her heart, "Must I shape my life according to his wishes, give up my days, to the petty details which he exacts from me, and which have no meaning or potency for me?"

Thus she fretted and chafed, as she felt the time slipping away, without a spade turned in the field she cared most to harrow. She wished to please her husband, and her love for him kept her wavering between what she longed to begin, and the fear of his displeasure. She would often have moments of wild, passionate craving, when she would go into her room, raise her arms above her head, and cry out: "I cannot live this existence; I feel my heart drying up, my very soul withering within me. I must go out and gather the little children about me; but even this he forbids me. Oh, my heavenly Father, help me in this conflict." Gartha, with all her woman's clinging, was holding on tenaciously to what was once her ideal; her husband was always the gentleman, always the same Apollo-like being; but it was his indifference, the humiliation which he subjected her to daily; that was the chilling blight which fell on her life, and caused her to cry, "Oh, for a touch of the hand, a breath, a ray of light, something by which I can feel and know, that my friend and sister Mary is

near me." And at these moments there would be given her a calm, a solace, a resignation to her fate, a peace which soothed her for days.

And thus it was, she who from childhood had been the teacher and guide of others, she who could turn the mind from muddy sloughs to pure streams, she whose body was a temple of chastity, whose garments were as unstained as the lilies of the field, and did not care how much she smirched them with others' filth, so long as with a gentle hand she led them into the straight and healthful path, she who was strong in temptation, firm in principle, brave when it came to right and wrong, seemed powerless now to guide her own steps, or stay the will which bent and swayed her like the winds did the branches of the trees in her garden. Such is the power one individual holds over the actions and happiness of another. These were the gray clouds that had flitted across the sky of our heroine, the dark shadow which now and then rested on her fair brow. At times an unconscious folding of the arms, accompanied with a sigh, a lapsing into thought, sitting for an hour or half hour with her clear eyes, trying to penetrate the veil which is drawn between the visible and invisible, and whose tears often dimmed their light. Perhaps when the storm comes, beats and rages about her in earnest, she may find her strength and stand as deeply rooted as the giant Oak, resisting all its force.

Thus we find Gartha eighteen months after her marriage to Arthur Lowell. It was late in the afternoon, of a late summer day, her usual time for open-



ing the closed shutters and windows of the house, to let the cool breeze blow through. As she stepped out onto the porch, and seated herself in a large willow rocking-chair, with her work-basket in her lap, and was in the act of searching for her thimble, she thought she heard footstep on the walk; raising her eyes she saw standing before her, her husband and a young girl. She could hardly tell whether the girl was sixteen or twenty years of age. At the first glance, her face appeared childish, but when she came to look again, it seemed older than even twenty years, and had an expression of maturity which the world gives to those who enter its gaities when in their first teens; in other words the freshness and bloom of the girl had been rubbed off. Gartha's first impression was that of dislike, but when she saw the slight, tall figure, the face with its skin like marble, the large, dark blue eyes, the chestnut brown hair, the brows, the heavy, long fringed lids, the rose-bud mouth, her cheek flushed to think she had wronged her. It was the nose that had impressed her so disagreeably.

"My wife, Miss Effie Graham," said Arthur, removing his hat and fanning himself with it, "a young pupil left in my charge for a year or two; I did not think a boarding house just the place for a young girl, so I thought the best thing to do was to bring her home. I could think of no one who would take better care of her than yourself."

"Come in," said Gartha, rising and extending her hand, "you must be tired, as the day has been very warm." The girl looked anything but warm and tired,

and seemed entirely oblivious of Gartha's kindness, as she mechanically stretched out a small gloved hand to take the one so generously proffered her.

"Come into my room, perhaps you would like to bathe your face and brush your hair, before tea," said Gartha, relieving her husband of Effie's wraps and traveling satchel.

"I believe I will, a little cool water would feel good," answered the girl, raising her eyes to Mrs. Lowell's face for the first time, but she instantly dropped them again, as Gartha's somewhat inquiring gaze met hers.

"Your home is it far from here?" asked Gartha, as she poured out the cool water into the basin.

"My present home is about ten or fifteen miles from the city, on the other side of the river," replied the girl.

"Did I understand that you had lost both father and mother?" inquired Gartha, who had enough woman's curiosity to make her impatient to find out more about her new charge, than what Arthur had imparted.

"My parents must have died when I was but a mite of a baby. Aunt Salina, who was my real aunt, never said much about them; only that my mother was her sister," returned Effie, wiping her face with the corner of the towel in a sort of slipshod way. "My own aunt, who was Aunt Salina, died about a year ago, and I have been living with Aunt Madge, who is not my aunt or any relation, but she always, since I remember anything, lived with Aunt Salina. She's a



horrid thing, and you wouldn't like her a bit; I have never cared for her, and I think she could poison me, because Aunt Salina left me all her fortune. Aunt Madge expected to get half at least of her estate. Aunt Salina left her but a small portion, and a monthly allowance. Neither do I like Aunt Madge's and Aunt Salina's lawyer, although he did fetch me to see Mr. Lowell. Aunt Salina gave me permission in her will to go two years to the Art Academy. I could never, while she lived, induce her to let me go. I do love to paint," she said, with a kind of breathless softness, opening out her long braids of hair, until it fell about her shoulders, like heavy, lustrous folds of brown satin. "Professor Lowell is so handsome; oh, he's your husband, ain't he; oh he's lovely; do you paint?" she asked, with a suppressed eagerness, glancing at Gartha, then quickly turning her eyes in another direction of the room.

"What a strange girl!" thought Gartha, "it is evident she has had no moral training; I will do what I can for her; there is nothing sweeter than youth, still it is hard to break one of slovenly habits and bad manners, after they have been formed."

In a few moments tea was served; Effie seemed to enjoy the meal, as she did everything she saw in the house and about the grounds. After tea, Arthur left them, as he had to be present at some meeting of the board of directors, and a little later Effie complained of feeling tired. Gartha showed her up-stairs to her room, the spare chamber which was a symphony in blue and pink; she then left her to retire

and went down stairs and out to the front gate, where she stood some moments looking down the road, and her eyes rested lovingly on Tanglewood, nestling among the tall forest trees. Dear Tanglewood, she thought, and sighed. It was a beautiful night, soft and warm, with languid perfumed winds, which blew about her, and kissed her cheek and hair. She left the gate, went and seated herself in one of the rustic benches that stood under one of the large maples, and her thoughts wandered to the young girl, and the strange manner in which she was brought to her home. There was something about her, young and pretty as she was, that was not to her liking; a something that jarred on all her fine sensibilities. Arthur would certainly explain the matter to her more fully when he came home, and they were alone together. The girl was an orphan, and she could see, in a sense, uneducated; could she take her to her heart? Could she form her character, and instill in her all the fine principles and good she most desired to see in woman? She was afraid not; the girl was too old, but she would try and overcome her prejudice towards her; it was wrong for those who preached generosity to other's faults, not to practice it themselves.

These were her thoughts, when she heard a voice at her side say: "Gartha!" She looked up and saw Carrie, Mrs. Carst, standing before her. "Dearest, is it you?" exclaimed Gartha, rising and folding Carrie in her arms. "Dear girl, have you come back to us?" And Gartha wept as she kissed Carrie again



and again. "And who is this?" she asked, after a few moment's silence, and turning to the black woman who stood a little distance from them with a little girl of nearly eight or nine months, in her arms.

"It is Charlotte, you remember mamma's maid, and my little Mary."

"Yes, I recollect now your mother's faithful nurse, and as much as the invading darkness will permit me to see, little Mary is the image of yourself," replied Gartha, taking the child in her arms.

"Papa says she is another Van Court," returned Carrie, seating herself on the bench, and Gartha observed that Carrie had changed for the better; that there was no trace in her face of the bitterness it wore the morning of her wedding; but instead an expression of resignation, that touched it with some of the softness of earlier days.

"I have named her Mary, for her we both loved."

"Ah, yes, so beloved, so dear to us all," answered Gartha with a sigh.

"Charlotte has been Mary's nurse since mamma's death."

"I was not aware you had lost your mother, when did she die?"

"She died six months ago, while we were abroad; papa had taken mamma to Nice for her health and she passed away while there. Since her death papa has changed so much for the better. I am free to go where I please now; he would not mind a bit if I were to go to the cottage. I suppose Nelson has told

you about our meeting several times at receptions, during his stay last winter at the Capital." And she pressed Gartha's hand tightly. Gartha shuddered, but it was not perceived by Carrie. "And papa has made amends to Nelson for the haughty, insolent way he had treated him before my marriage," she continued, "he introduced Nelson to every man of note and influence, and his stay at the state Capital was quite a success. Aside from the large painting for the governor's house, he received commissions for several others. I hope papa will like Nelson better and better, and I think he will, as Nelson has a chance to reveal to him his true character."

"And I am sure your father will find him honorable, manly and courageous," returned Gartha, whose cheek burned little Mary's as she held the child's face close to hers; but her answer seemed rather a challenge to some internal troubled question of her own.

They talked for an hour and over, of many things in the past, of a new future opening up to both, and of a happy social intercourse. Then Gartha took her into the house, and showed her through the pretty rooms. After they stood on the front porch, promising renewed friendship and to soon meet again. Carrie was to come often and bring Charlotte and little Mary. "Oh, you may be sure it will not be but a few days until I am here popping in on you in the old way."

After Carrie left Gartha stood at the gate, pondering over the events of the evening; what a strange



coincidence, she thought; the coming of the girl to her home and Carrie's visit. Was it safe for her and Nelson to be thrown again together? Carrie did not mention her husband; she herself had heard unpleasant rumors concerning him and a noted society woman; then Arthur came leisurely up the walk smoking a cigar.

"My dear, out here in the damp air, watching for my return, of course. Now don't bother about me; I can take care of myself," he said, and was going to pass her, but she took his arm and walked by his side into the house. Arthur went into the dining-room and seated himself in one of the large willow arm-chairs to finish his cigar. When Gartha had fastened the doors and windows for the night, she went to the dining-room, knelt down beside him and wound her arms about his neck, and laid her head on his shoulder. "What now?" he said, stroking her beautiful hair.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," she answered with a sigh.

"Where is Effie?" he asked, not heeding her sigh.

"In her room," was her reply, smothering another sigh.

## CHAPTER V.

### AFTER THE GOVERNOR'S BALL.

WE must now go back a few months to early spring, the season at the state Capital was drawing to a close; the Governor's ball being the winding up of all the brilliant balls and receptions given through the winter. Madame Bogardus had spent the winter at the state Capital. She had spent all her winters there since Laurence Carst had been a member of the Legislature. The General had always business of great importance there while that august body was in session.

No salon during the past season was more gay and lavish in its splendor than Madame's, she outdid and outshone all competitors for social honors. Large banking houses and business firms, if one has but observed, the nearer they are to failure and ruin, the greater risks they run. It was the fear of a crash, that made Madame Bogardus try to rival all other women of her set in her costumes, and cause her more than ever to meditate. It was after midnight, and Madame had just come from the Governor's ball, as she entered her room, she threw off her fur-lined cloak, in a manner which indicated she was not in the very best of humor. She crossed the floor, went



and stood before the mirror in all the splendor of her rich attire; in all the superbness of her flashing, gleaming gems. Her face is pale, and she shows her pearls the least bit, then a faint smile moves and lingers about the drooping corners of the sensual mouth, which, after all, betokens she has something to meditate on, quite to her liking. She leaves the mirror, paces up and down the floor, a few moments, then throws herself into a chair. How she purrs and wraps and unwraps her fingers in her velvet palms, as she falls to meditating.

“Ah, I have succeeded at last in bringing them together, the fine young fellow and her; he has changed so much for the better since his tour abroad, and grown so handsome that I did not recognize him when he first came to the Capital, in the early winter. And then an artist besides, how romantic, and poor of course. Artists are generally poor, especially in this country; our nouveau riche buy all their paintings in Europe. Two poor fools, why didn't they marry and have done with it? It's all she's fit for. Yes, this young Lawrie has been here all winter, engaged on some large painting, for the Governor's new house. He was all defference to her to-night. I wonder if Carst observed them, when their eyes met, how pale she turned, then blushed to the roots of her hair. I am sure he did, for as the fine young fellow drew near to her side, I took particular pains to attract Carst's attention to them. If I can but arouse his jealousy, his suspicion of his wife and the fine young fellow; ah, the outcome what would it

be? I know not, I care not; I must use him to carry out my plans. Then let Carst threaten to sunder the ties he himself in the beginning left nothing undone to create; yes, let him, if he dares." She rises, paces the floor again, up and down. Her French maid enters, and Madame, assuming a subdued dignity, asks her if the General had retired.

"Oui, Madame, it ize some time zince Villiam, ze General's valet, informed me zat ze General had retired." Madame dismisses her maid, she will dispense with her services to-night, as it is so late, and she is not ready yet to retire; not having finished her meditation. She throws herself into her satin-lined chair, but Madame is doomed to be interrupted; a light tap at the door, and Laurence Carst enters unannounced.

He wore a long, black cloak wrapped about him, the high collar drawn up about his neck, and partially concealing his face. As he entered he threw the fold of his cloak back over his shoulder. He was still in evening dress. "Be seated," said Madame, in a half audible tone, and pointing to a chair near the one she reclined in, but Carst did not comply with her request, but stood in the middle of the room.

"Another new costume," he said, after a long pause in which neither spoke, "yet you assured me that you would make no more demands upon me for money until I could recover a little from what was filched from me when I went into the State Senate, and the promises I have made for my congressional campaign, during the coming fall."



"Madame Carst wore a new costume to-night, fully as expensive as this," she replied, picking up the pearl and point lace fan that lay on her lap, and began swaying it to and fro, in a slow, voluptuous motion, then letting it fall listlessly on her lap again.

"My wife has her own income," he answered with a sneer, a sneer that was never pleasant to behold, "she can do as she feels like with it, and spend it as she sees fit. Madame," he went on, taking a step or two nearer to where she was seated, and resting his cold glance upon her; his delicate hand trembling with suppressed anger, as he pulled at his brown, silken goatee, "I demand that this unnecessary expenditure of money must and shall be stopped. I will here be explicit with you, no matter what exposure shall follow; not one dollar of my wife's private income shall I touch for you. It is but a few months since a bill of your dressmaker's for three thousand dollars was cashed at my banker's, and there is another five hundred," he said, pointing to the rich brocade shimmering under lace, which fell about her and on the floor like crusted snow flakes, glinting in the sunlight. "I positively refuse to pay any more such bills." He stepped a few paces back and wrapped the fold of his cloak about him.

"Mrs. Carst is a virtuous wife, she will not mind making small sacrifices; go tell her that you are straitened for money, which seems queer, when you know how money flowed into every member's hands during the fight over the great street-car combine. Jim Gilson said there was five hundred thou-

sand dollars used by the B's, and your vote was reserved to put the clinch on D's. 'Tell her," she continued, without daring to raise her eyes to his, "that you had to use a great deal of money, in your last campaign, and now in the coming fight for congress; and she will give you her whole year's income. She can give up pleasures, luxuries and society, because she does not care for them. But I must have them. I have worked hard for you the last three months and in a little while you shall go to congress, then to the United States Senate. Have faith in me, I have not lost that power which brings men to my feet; but don't mind my gowns; I can work to better advantage in fine gowns. Mrs. Carst will give you her whole fortune if you will but absent yourself when young Lawrie is around." She dare not turn her face towards him, she felt his gaze upon her, while her head, with its crowning of gold, leaned against the crimson satin of the chair and moved her fan, back and forth, in slow undulations.

"Do you mean to infer that my wife's conduct is not of the most chaste? I have never questioned but what she was one of the purest of women," he replied, but not without doubt, and suspicion, gleaming from his eyes, which were white with rage; not without the wrinkle of jealousy in his heart, as he ran his nervous fingers through his maple brown goatee. We generally judge others by our own standard of things, be they high or low, and some see them with eyes dimmed by the film of narrowness and sin, which obscures the vision, to all but the blurred and



splotched surface. The web which Madame had woven so intricately about him, and which at first seemed so slight, so soft and silken, until like the poor, silly fly he was caught, fast, bound hand and foot, in its meshes. And what are men after all with their pride of reason, strength and intellect, but poor, silly flies, when it comes to a woman like Madame? They are willing enough to be entrapped, ensnared, by a smile, a caressing touch of her white velvet hand. Prate of reason, but where is the reason then? Or, if they have any, they don't care to use it.

"Bah," she hissed, springing up from her seat, her face pale, her eyes glaring, and showing her pearls, clear to their red setting, "fool, are you blind to the attentions she receives from Nelson Lawrie, the artist? Do you think she loves you; do you imagine she ever loved you? Did you care when you married her whether she loved you or not? Marriage for convenience is a good thing; it suited your purpose; it gave you more wealth, position and influence, and I made it suit mine." For an instant her eyes met his, but she crouched down under his unflinching gaze, like the cat she was; had he averted her glance she would have sprung upon him and clutched at his throat; but she shrank back and threw herself into a chair, and kept her eyes turned from him, so that he might not see the fierce passion, the momentary hate, that glared from them.

For a second or two all his courage, arrogance and self-conceit left him and he seemed to shrivel up within himself. Still he knew her weakness, her love

of the world, and the things of the world; its pleasures, honors and triumphs, and she had as much and more to lose than himself.

He stepped a few paces towards her. "I hope my wife's name will never again be mentioned between us," his voice was low, but cold to cruelty, "and I repeat, I refuse to pay any more exorbitant bills contracted by you." There was a decision in his tone and manner that Madame was not used to and it made her shudder, for her plans were not yet matured. He picked up his hat from a table, where he had laid it when he first entered her boudoir, wrapped his cloak about him and crossed the floor to the door.

She leaped from her seat and was at his side in an instant. "Stay," she cried, "do you think that you can throw me aside now, strip me of my social position and triumphs, and have those who kneel at my feet scorn and spurn me? To make a scandal now would ruin you, ruin your whole career; you could never be elected to congress."

She tore at the rare old point lace of her dainty handkerchief until it fell in shreds at her feet. "My mother sold me to that wretch lying in yonder room, in a drunken, sottish sleep. Position and wealth, position and wealth, was sung in my ears since I was five years old; since my old black nurse stood me on a chair before the bureau glass, and held up my golden curls and murmured, 'was there ever such a beautiful child?' And as the years went by position and wealth was my dream by day and night. Ha, ha, ha, General



Bogardus came; he had position and wealth, and my mother urged my marriage to him. Yes he gave me position, but cheated me in the wealth. Then you threw your love and gold at my feet; I stooped down and picked them up, so I cheated him." She raised her jeweled hands, pulled the pink roses from her bosom and began to pick their leaves one by one, until the floor where she stood was strewn with their color and perfume. "No, no, it must not be," she went on, digging her pearls into the red lips, until it seemed they they would spurt blood, "to make a scandal now would kill your whole career. I own I have been a little extravagant," she said, more softly, "but I have my reasons, and my ambition gets away with me sometimes." He made a move to the door again, but she held him back, and laid her head, with its coils of yellow fleece, on his shoulder.

"Don't detain me; I have been here too long now," he said, gently. "I have an engagement at the —— House, with Jim Gilson. I must see him before he leaves for St. L. in the morning." But Madame held him fast, nor did she let him go until she knew she was forgiven, at least until the next quarrel.

When Carst left Madame Bogardus he got into his carriage that was awaiting him outside, and was driven down town to the —— House, where Jim Gilson was to meet him, some time after midnight. He found him asleep on a sofa in his room, but Jim bounded up as soon as he heard the knock on his

door. "Thought you were going to slip me," he said, looking at his watch, "it's now half after two. Take a seat."

"It's late, Gilson; all I want to know if the whole affair is settled."

"Settled; there never was anything settled handsomer. D. and L., as you know, fought like tigers; they are the only men I have ever met in all my political jobbing, that I ever knew to have a conscience. They did fight for the people's interest, pure and simple; but they were from the farming counties." And Jim dropped one corner of his light greenish blue eye, and fixed it on Carst, who had thrown himself into a chair near a table that stood in the center of the room.

"I'm a hard man, and an unscrupulous one, when I come to deal with my fellows, who are in the same pot with myself, and reaching out after the same jug," he said, placing a chair by the table, and seating himself, Carst's vis-a-vis; "but it took a will of iron and the nerve of steel to do what you did, and by ——, by George, I mean, I admire you for it; yes, da—n me, if I don't. Oh, yes, the franchise is for fifty years, and is worth millions, and millions; yes, hundreds of millions," he muttered, rising, and beginning to pace the floor, "and it won't be three years before the combine will control every street, avenue and road in the city; and for twenty miles into every surrounding suburb, north, south, east and west. And they will control all the electric plants, gas



plants and every right of way, and old St. L., that in the past owned herself, and her citizens that were free, comfortable and happy, have been sold; and the people's dream of municipal ownership is gone forever; the people have been sold. Yes, da—n me, sold."

"Bah, it is the forward march of the times, Jim; what do the masses understand or care?" said Carst, glancing with a cold glitter in his eye on the man pacing the floor, the thin nostrils of his long, aristocratic nose dilating, as he continued, "the common herd know they have to have men of brain, men of affairs to govern and manage these things; besides, they will be better served, have quicker transportation and cheaper rates."

"Ye-s, that was the issue the franchise was fought out on, the benefit of the people," and Jim laughed; it was a mean, insinuating laugh, "it's the old dodge, the old stock in trade. We do everything nowadays for the good of the people. Of course—sure,—we have always the good of humanity at heart; no self-interest." And Jim fairly roared this time. "Excuse me, your honor, I mean no offense, but the good of the people and the humanity dodge is the finest kind of an instrument to work with. I've never as yet known it to fail in politics. Well, the B's wanted to behave niggardly, but before we got through with them there was a cool five hundred thousand used. No offense, your honor, it was all done in the proper way; all legitimate, sir," and Jim dropped the lid of

his small, light, pea-green eye, but there was a curious brightness in it as he took a furtive glance at his chief, and set his thin lips squarely together.

"All it wants now is the Governor's signature," said Carst, his white fingers pulling nervously at the ends of his brown mustache. "Do you think he will hold back?"

"Not at all, sir; there will be a little dilly-dallying, and the usual howl, in the partisan press, but that is the newspapers' by play, their after farce. The Governor will take his medicine nicely; he will hold enough shares, so his family won't starve for the rest of all their natural lives. Of course, you know how these things are managed; they will simply be made a present to him, if not now, after his term of office expires." And Jim stood by the table and poured out two glasses of sherry from a decanter. "Take a little, sir, it will warm you up, and now to wind up the business, you will run for congress in the fall, and the next March walk right into the Capitol at Washington. That's promised, dead sure."

Jim Gilson was the new type of wire-puller, the man who does the questionable work of politics; as his chief, Carst, was the new type of legislator. One might say that Jim Gilson was an improvement on his older brother in the same political line; he was more polished, better dressed and better educated, and had plenty of money. But, of the two, the older had more heart, more originality and distinct character, and that which goes to make the man was not so



much eliminated ; for Jim, while he had a keen Irish-Yankee sense of the humbug, and the false methods and expedients used to blind the people, but, like his chief, again, he was utterly unscrupulous, when it came to his own interests, and gaining his own ends. As Carst was the product of his time and country, Jim Gilson was the product of men like Carst.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOCIETY IN A FLUTTER.

It was again a June night, and all the wealth and joyousness of spring and its fainter tints of bud and bloom had matured into the deeper and richer colors of early summer. The Van Court mansion and the Van Court grounds were again the scene of music, light and revelry. The warm south winds wandered through the stately trees, laden with the fragrance of flowers, and the perfume gathered from fields of ripe grain, which rose and fell in waves of golden foam to hills that lost themselves in a heavy bluish haze, and defied absorption from the noon-day sun. Bearing on its wings the scent from meadows of timothy, whose slender, graceful blades it kissed into swelling seas of bright green, and made the night as seductive as the waltz, which floated out on the air, soft and sensuous with its redolence.

Mrs. Carst's reception was given before she and the family hied away to the Springs, and Laurence, her husband, had urged it for political reasons. Carrie stood in her pale gold brocade, its sheen made softer by fleecy clouds of creamy lace; gems flashed on her bosom, encircled her throat, gleamed on her arms and hands, and bound up her black tresses.



Her father stood to her left, her husband to her right, and little Topping flitted about in a robe of white satin and gauze. Topping wore nothing in these days but white; it was so cool, so pure, so very suggestive of refinement. Madame Bogardus was attired in a delicate shade of blue satin; she generally wore more striking toilets, but on this night, for reasons best known to herself, she appeared in more subdued colors, something which would give her a touch of pensiveness. How she purred, how luring her glance, as she leaned on the arm of the General and gave Mrs. Carst the tips of her white gloved fingers. Following her came Nelson Lawrie, and Mr. and Mrs. Lowell. Carst watches Nelson's every movement with cold, glittering eyes, how they flash with disdain and scorn, as they met his honest, cordial gaze. The Judge's greeting to Nelson and the professor was gracious; but the lovely Mrs. Lowell, the Judge expressed the admiration he felt for her, in all the polite courtesies and delicate attentions of the well-bred gentleman of the old régime. And Carrie thought she had never remembered seeing Gartha when she looked more beautiful.

Beautiful, indeed, she was, what can we say of her. She was more like a daughter of the gods, a sister of the fair Psyche in her robe of diaphanous white, that draped and clung about her tall, willowy form. No jewels nor ornaments adorned her person, only a blush rose pinned at her throat, and in her hair. Why does Madame Bogardus clutch at the rubies on her

bosom, as the clear eyes of Gartha meet hers? Madame has her reason. Gartha's eyes are too honest, too pure, they will thwart Madame in some of her well laid schemes. And what is it that makes Topping forget her own personal charms for the moment and gaze in wonder at Mrs. Lowell? It must be the special study of the curls that escape from her rippling hair, and fall over the broad, fair brow, and which have no power to chase away the shadows that come and go, and leave it more troubled for having rested there. But Topping sees no trace of them, and her social nature forbids her standing longer on ceremony. "My dear Mrs. Lowell," she said, crossing to Gartha's side, "it's some time since we first met at the cottage of the Lawrie's." And Topping offered the tips of her gloved fingers to Gartha. "Tanglewood, oh yes, I shall never forget the impression the dear, delightful place made upon me; you know I am such a lover of the arts, and indeed everything that is picturesque and quaint. Young Mr. Lawrie was going to Europe at the time, and I followed the next spring; how unlucky, never to have run across him while abroad; but come to think of it, we did come very near meeting at Paris. I had just arrived there from London, as he took ship for this country. Yes, his sister was looking very pale that summer." The Judge, somewhat annoyed at Topping's gush, made a move to leave, but Topping turned quickly from Gartha and tapped him playfully on the hand, with her fan, run her arm, which was



bare to the shoulder, through his, and marched him off to the grounds where the dancing was at its height.

"What a brilliant assemblage," she said, beckoning the Judge to a seat beside her. The Judge, who always felt she had designs upon him, hesitated a moment, then his good breeding overcoming his irritation, he took the proffered seat. "How pleased you must be over Carst's going to congress in the fall, do tell me about it, tell me what you think?" she said, looking up in his face, and snapping her little brown eyes.

"My dear Madame, I have no opinion on the subject," he replied, with dignity, feeling vexed at the way in which he was taken possession of, "men have to run their chances in politics as well as other things; the public is fickle, and as for honesty at the polls it is a thing not to be counted on."

Here Frank came with silver salver in hand, and asked if massa an' de lady didn't want an ice an' a cool drink of something.

Madame Bogardus was holding her court in the dancing tent. Gentlemen gathered about her, and men who were not gentlemen. Office-seekers, politicians, wire-pullers, and men who do the work, that gentlemen won't do. All these, with their leader, Jim Gilson, were paying court to Madame. Jim Gilson's attentions to Madame to-night were marked. Indeed Madame, once or twice, was shocked at his familiarity. Carst was not so far away but what he saw all Madame's movements, and his eyes flashed

with passion and the resentment of what he considered coarse officiousness in Jim Gilson. Thus we cannot touch smut without being smutched. But, notwithstanding her court, Madame never lost sight of her prey.

Mrs. Carst, after receiving her guests and speaking a few pleasant words to all, left the house and strayed into the grounds; she wandered down to a large old oak tree where she was in the habit of sitting of mornings under its shade. She generally spent an hour or two here with a book or her embroidery before lunch; while Charlotte, who sat on the grass at her feet, holding little Mary, feeling the great responsibility of guardian and nurse, to both mother and child. She was quite tired after her long standing and sat down to rest; she had not been seated long when Nelson came walking leisurely towards her. He had left Gartha and her husband a few moments before for the purpose of a stroll, and having a quiet smoke. He threw away his cigar and seated himself beside her.

"I felt quite fatigued after my long stand," she said, "and stole away from the crowd, it is so quiet here and it's my favorite trysting place; little Mary, myself and Charlotte spend our mornings here."

"Let me order an ice and a glass of wine, it will refresh you," he said, rising. On his way to the refreshment tent he met Frank and told him where Mrs. Carst had taken refuge, and to fetch what he thought she liked best, as he was better acquainted with her tastes than he. "Yes, sah, laws Massa Lawrie, ye



tinks Ise ben bon unda Massa's de Jedge's roof, an' not knows what Miss Carrie likes. Yah, ha, yah, ha, Lod yah, ha." Nelson had scarcely seated himself again, when Frank came with a tray full of creams, orange ices and cakes, and glasses of the different kinds of wines.

"I have never had the pleasure of seeing little Mary. Gartha informed me she was the perfect image of yourself."

"Would it please you to see her? She is very mischievous and as full of pranks as a kitten," she said, holding a spoonful of cream to her lips, but barely tasting it.

"Indeed it would; I can think of nothing that would give me greater pleasure than to see your child," he answered in a low voice.

"Will you love her for my sake?" she asked softly, but sadly.

"I am very fond of children; I think there is nothing sweeter than a little, prattling child," he replied, turning away his face, and giving his mustache a vigorous pull. Carrie's ice almost choked her and she let the spoon fall listlessly on the dish.

"Come some evening before her bed-time," she said, assuming her old light way, "then you will see her in her best mood; she don't like to go to bed, and Charlotte has to resort to all the arts and strategy she is mistress of to get her to the nursery. She is asleep now, or I would have Charlotte fetch her down."

"I shall come some evening, and if you are not at home, her nurse can fetch her to me."

"I will be at home to you, if at home, but send me word when you intend coming, and I shall be sure not to make any other engagement. And you will love little Mary for my sake," she said, raising her beautiful eyes in a pleading way to his face. How often did her eyes meet his with that same expression when a girl, when he had dreamed his dreams of riches and fame, to be laid at her feet. In his impulsiveness he took her hand in his, but she instantly withdrew it and rose up; as she did so she saw her husband and Madame Bogardus standing behind a tree, not twenty yards from where she and Nelson were seated, the trunk of the tree but partially concealing them. She caught but a glimpse of her husband's face, but it was disfigured with jealous hate and revenge. Oh, how Madame purred at his side, how caressingly her hand held Carst's arm; those yellow orbs, how dark and intense they grew, as she purred and purred, so elated was she with the success of her plot. Poor mouse, poor Carrie, she was so innocent of wrong doing, so unconscious of the enemy who had all along and who was still pursuing her.

Carrie handed the dainty china dish to Nelson, who carried it to the tent. When he had gone, she went into the house and up stairs to her room, and from there to the nursery where little Mary lay asleep in her crib. She looked down a few moments upon the sweetly closed lids, the perfect oval face, and mouth like a rose-bud opening into bloom. She stooped over and kissed her. Leaving the room, she went down stairs and into the conservatory, where she



picked a bunch of heliotrope and a few tea roses. From there she walked to the library, and finding it empty, she threw herself on a sofa that stood near a window, which opened onto one of the small piazzas. She was glad to be alone with her thoughts; what she had passed through in the last few years, her child should never experience, if she could help it, if she was spared to watch over her young life. Mary should never know her unhappiness, should never marry a man she did not love; no matter what the after consequences might be, and she was sure she would never marry a man who was unworthy of her.

Nelson, after leaving the refreshment tent, lighted a cigar and strolled down towards the orchard. His thoughts were of Carrie and her child; she was another man's wife, he knew, but they loved each other before she married this other man, and there was no crime in his still loving her. The man she called husband was a villain, and committed a sacrilege when he married her; he had seen him and the other woman together but a few moments ago. Her father was aware now of Carst's baseness, and it was retribution for the indignities he had heaped upon him the morning when he stood in his library, asking for his daughter's hand. Her father had since tried to make amends for the wrong he had done, and he had forgiven him, as much as he was capable of forgiveness. He sauntered about the grounds for some time, until his steps led him again to the house. He would go in and take one more look at the old engravings he saw hanging in the library; it would be the last oppor-

tunity he would have for a long time, and perhaps never again. He went up the steps of the back porch, crossed it and went into the hall. As he entered the library door Carrie rose from her reclining position.

"Pardon me," he said, agreeably surprised at finding her again so unexpectedly, "I had such a strong desire to take one look more at these old engravings; they are very good and quite rare, as they are almost out of print. Am I intruding?" he asked, standing in the middle of the floor with bowed head.

"It was so cool and quiet here, I thought I would steal a few moments' rest. Come," she said, and she beckoned him to a seat beside her on the sofa. "I do wish papa would buy some good paintings; he has plenty of money; I have been wanting him to give you a commission for one, for a long time, and he will. When I get settled in my new house, I intend to have you paint me one of your best, and I shall pay you handsomely for it. It will be my aim to make quite a collection of paintings, taking so much out of my income every year for their purchase." Then, after a pause, she added, "When you left I went up-stairs to the nursery to see if Maim was awake, if she had been I would have brought her down." She held the bunch of heliotrope and tea roses up to inhale their perfume. "Oh, Nelson," she said, laying her hand on his arm, her soft warm hand; to touch him, to feel its pressure once again, "oh, Nelson, I have caused you so much suffering and pain, and all by my weakness, cowardice, my love of wealth, luxury and position. Had I been true to my better self, my woman-



hood and the love I bore you, I should never have taken the step I did. Nelson, I have suffered; I did not love my husband, but my cup was full when I discovered the baseness of his treachery, the insult to my wifeness. I know now how you must have suffered. Will you forgive me, and forgive my father, and love little Mary for my sake?"

"Oh, Carrie, I love you; and it is impossible for me to imagine now that I shall ever know the day I will not love you. How, then, can I help loving your child," he replied, taking her hand, and raising it reverently to his lips.

"Bah, see for yourself," were the words that came hissing to Carrie's ear. She tore her hand from Nelson's, looked up and saw Madame Bogardus and Carst, her husband, standing by the window, and in a second Carst was in the room. His face was flushed with wine, his eyes glistened with the fire of a deadly hate and revenge; the thin lips were set in cruel compression, as he confronted them.

"Scoundrel; low-bred plebeian," he cried, his white hand uplifted to Nelson's face, when Gartha, with arms raised above her head, appeared and stepped between them. Carrie, pale as death, took a few steps forward and fell fainting to the floor.

"Nelson, leave, leave, I beseech you, and on your honor do not let a breath of this affair get out. Come, come with me; there is a mistake somewhere," and Gartha took hold of Nelson's arm and, like a man stunned by a terrible blow, he followed her without a word out to the piazza, where she left him and re-

turned to the library. Carst had also left the library. Gartha called to Charlotte and in a few moments Carrie was restored to consciousness. Gartha had heard some words pass between Carst and Madame Borgardus which led her to think there was something wrong, and that Carrie and Nelson were the unconscious cause of it. She had observed Carrie going into the house, while she and Arthur were seated under a tree that stood some twenty yards from the front piazza; she had also observed Madame's strange movements, and a little later she saw her and Carst standing on the small southwest porch, looking into the library windows. She made up her mind that all was not right, that Madame was carrying out some plot, to injure her friends. She must follow and prevent harm, if possible.

"I cannot understand it," said Carrie, who wondered at the appearance of her husband, and his strange conduct. "I have never acted in any way that would compromise my own and my husband's honor, and Nelson Lawrie's manner towards me has ever and always been most courteous and circumspect. I am wounded to the heart, Gartha; it is an outrage against my womanhood."

"My dear, don't breathe it; never pretend to your husband but what it was a little mistaken jealousy on his part." Gartha then left Carrie in care of Charlotte, thinking the whole affair at an end, and found Arthur waiting for her at the foot of the winding stairway, knowing nothing of what had taken place, he supposing his wife had gone for her wraps.



## CHAPTER VII.

### SUNRISE.

EARLY the following morning there was a loud ring at the Lawrie cottage door; the summons was answered by Mrs. Lawrie in person. On opening the door, there stood before her a tall, slender man, of some thirty-two or three years, with bright, keen eyes, a heavy, black mustache, its long waxed ends curling up in the most dainty fashion. His clothes were of the latest cut, and in his neatly gloved hand he twirled a fancy willow cane.

“Good morning, Madame; young Mr. Lawrie at home?”

“Yes, come in,” said Mrs. Lawrie, but not without surprise, wondering who the stranger could be.

“Can I see him alone, as I have a small matter of business with him, but quite important,” he said, twirling his cane, around and around. Mrs. Lawrie led the way to the studio. “My son, a gentleman to see you.”

Nelson ceased his pacing up and down the floor, as he was still laboring under the excitement of the night before. When Mrs. Lawrie closed the door of the studio, the strange gentleman handed Nelson a letter, not on the point of a sword, as in the days of

chivalry, but in purely American fashion. Nelson read the challenge.

"It's all right," he said, looking searchingly into the stranger's face; "I hope no hint of this affair has been given to any one but the parties concerned, as I would not for the world, yes, ten worlds, have a word breathed against a name I hold as sacred as my mother's, and as dear as life itself."

"My dear fellow, we are obliged to keep the thing quiet," returned the stranger, smoothing his silk hat. "Of course I believe in the code; yes, sir, I'm a great stickler for 'hona.' Still, we have tried to persuade Carst to let the matter drop; if he's the survivor, it is bound to kill his chances for congress; bound to kill him politically.

Nelson made no reply, but walked the floor in silence.

"It is all right, I suppose," said the stranger, opening the door.

"Yes, perfectly satisfactory; I accept the challenge," answered Nelson, bowing the stranger out.

"By George, a deucedly cool fellow," said the stranger to himself, as he walked down the path to the gate, "lots of courage there, too fine a chest for a piece of cold steel to be lodged in, and all for the sake of a petticoat. Always thought those artists and poetical fellows, a kind of womanish; but, damn me, if he won't hold his own with Carst." And the stranger twirled his cane, around and around, in his dainty gloved hand.

After the stranger left, Nelson continued his pacing



up and down the floor for some time; then seated himself at his desk. He wrote a long letter to his father and mother, which traced all that had passed between himself and Carrie, since their first meeting at the Capital, after their long separation. And that it was no fault of his, and not to fear, his hand should not be the one to strike down her husband. He told his mother what to do in case he should fall by Carst's bullet; and closed with all the endearing names a son might pen to a beloved mother, whom he might never see again. Then he wrote to Carl, and last of all to Gartha. When he finished, he directed and sealed them and left them on his desk. He was dressed in his every-day studio clothes, as he stopped in the hall to get his hat, and from there he went to the sitting-room where he found his mother seated by the window sewing. "Good-by, mother," he said, going towards her, and taking his place by her side in his usual boyish way, "I'm going out to make a few sketches." She gazed up in his face in wonder, thinking it strange of him to be going out in the heat of the day to make sketches, a thing she never knew him to do, but she said nothing. He turned and left her and went to the garden, where his father was weeding his beets.

"Good-by, father," he said, hurrying past him, down the path, and out the garden gate. "Good-by, my son," answered Peter, who thought no more of it.

Nelson walked rapidly until he came to the Avenue E, where he took an electric car, for down town. He got out at one of the thoroughfares, and stopped be-

fore a large building used for offices. Here he got into the elevator and was carried to the fifth story, that was used for offices, and lodging rooms, occupied generally by young clerks, in the offices. Here, in bachelor quarters, dwelt an old school-mate of his, whom he had not seen for several years; he had a good deal of experience in fire-arms, and when boys they often went hunting together. He found him in his room writing.

"Hello, Lawrie, haven't seen you for an age," he said, dropping his pen. "I thought you were too much taken up with art, and other aerial pursuits, for a fellow ever to set eyes on you."

Nelson threw himself into a chair, and after chatting a while about old times, told his friend his errand, and the whole story of his trouble, which was quite a surprise to the young man; as Lawrie, in his friend's language, "Was one of the very exemplary boys, you know, a-h-mm." They remained together all night, so as to be on hand the next morning.

Laurence Carst had challenged Nelson Lawrie to fight until one or the other should fall dead on the field. Madame had worked on a mind already suspicious, jealous, and cynical; he believed the worst of his wife. She loved this man before her marriage, and she loved him still; and according to his standard of morality, there could be no innocence, no chastity, in such a love. And just at the time when he was trying to rid himself of the woman who had held him so long her slave; who had entangled him in her soft, silken meshes, until they could never be unravelled.



At the moment when he most desired to take his wife and child to his heart; when the nation was beginning to recognize his talents, and confer upon him the honor his talents deserved. This revelation of his wife's unfaithfulness, as he thought, was unbearable. It is impossible for the slave to wrench asunder by one blow his chains, and drop them forever; the sound of their chink, lingers long with him, and it is years before he emerges a free man.

Laurence Carst was a slave to his desires, year by year they had forged the links in the chain, that weighted down body and soul, until he became so pitilessly weak that resistance was impossible. His jealous rage, his thirst for vengeance, overcame every other consideration. He was a gentleman, he would spill the last drop of blood of the man, who dared to cast dishonor on his name. His friends to whom he confided the matter, tried to persuade him to let the whole thing drop, to pass it over, as if it had never happened. Jim Gilson worked with him one whole long night to show him the utter silliness of a duel with the artist, because the young man paid a little over-attention to his beautiful wife. All warned him that it would kill his chances for congress and the United States Senate. But he would listen to no argument or advice, that would dissuade him from what he was bent on. One or the other must die. Here, again, Carst was unlike Lord Hastings, whom he resembled in many of his brilliant gifts, "that in his subjection to the influence of women, he had not, like Hastings, learned the government of men or himself."

We must now return to the cottage of our heroine, her home on the hill. The evening was quite sultry, and windows and doors stood open; Arthur had left on the afternoon train for a town about twenty-five miles distant, where he had an engagement to lecture on the beauty in art, at the closing exercises of the college, which makes that town famous. It was after tea and Gartha was seated on the front porch, she was clad in a loose robe of white mull, a few forget-me-nots nestled in the lace at her throat. She had pondered over the strange, but sad, incident of the night before; she must warn Nelson there was danger of scandal, and that unscrupulous woman was plotting against him and Carrie. No matter how honorable their intentions, she had long ago learned that the world would not look on their friendship, in the Platonic light; and it was safest for both to keep apart. The world is apt to turn aside from the good, and at anything which looks suspicious, put on its magnifying glasses and cry, "Horrors." It never stops to think or to ask the cause that prompted the act. Would we have done differently had we been in their places? We are startled by great social calamities, shocked by some terrible crime of crimes, by men in low and high places. We forget that little by little things accumulate, and it is step by step, down the pathway to degradation. Then comes something at the ripe moment, which culminates in a tragedy so awful that the heart stands still, and the blood seems like ice in our veins. And we cry out, can such things be? Alas, poor, blind bats, blind because we will not



see; they are going on around us, every day, they happen under our very noses, we stumble over them in our walks, they are going on in our very homes. Yet we close our eyes to them, we wish to see only the pleasant side of things, and not one hand, one finger will we raise to restrict, or restrain them. That beautiful sun sheds its light on alleys and by streets of poverty, where people are crowded like cattle; houses of vice, and mansions of luxury and shame, which create a miasma that comes stealing into our homes, and strikes down our sweetest and fairest flowers and they die. Such is sin.

Gartha sat thinking thus, until the feeling of some overshadowing evil was upon her. She rose and went to the gate, where Effie stood—Effie, still strange and mysterious to her. Try as she would she could not overcome a certain repugnance to the girl. She stood awhile debating with herself, whether or not to run over to Tanglewood, but feeling tired, she would put her visit off until morning, and by that time Nelson would be more composed, after a good night's rest. She left the gate, and went back to the porch and seated herself in one of the willow chairs; Effie followed her and sat down on the upper step, and began running on in her chattering way, until feeling sleepy she rose and went to her room. Gartha rose also and went into the house, and commenced closing the windows and doors of the parlor. She crossed the hall to the dining-room, where she saw by the clock on the mantelpiece that it was a quarter to ten. From there she went to the kitchen to give some order to

the girl about breakfast, and returned to the dining-room again, and stood in the open doorway that led out to a small piazza.

How silent and tender the night was, yet with a gentle melody of its own, which made the deepening shadows, a soft harmony to the violet arch above, with its grandeur of illumining lights, still mysterious to man. She closed the door, yes she would leave the dining-room window open, as there was a cool breeze coming that way. She took the lamp that burned on the table, and went to her own room, which opened off the dining-room. She set the lamp on her dressing-case, turned it low, then laid down on the sofa, to rest and think, a habit with her before retiring for the night.

A strong feeling of regret took possession of her that she did not go to Tanglewood; she had never before felt the desire so strong upon her to see Nelson. It was not so late yet, still it was dangerous to go by the pathway at that hour, and more risky to go through the field, and she would have to cross fences. Nelson never seemed dearer to her than now, and for a moment, and it was but momentarily, the thought flashed upon her, as it had often upon Nelson, since Carrie's marriage. (How blind they both had been.) Ah, yes, there are few of us but what are blind at times. The next instant they were with her husband. He had finished his lecture by this time; she was sure it was a success; how could it be otherwise. And all the young students, girls and boys, were gathering about him, admiring him for his talents and himself



personally; how could they help it. Oh, if he were only kinder to her, and had a little more sympathy with her, and her aims, how different her life would be;—yes—oh, so very different. She fell into a sound sleep, how long she had slept she knew not, when she heard a voice calling her name. She rose to a sitting posture, and saw through the windows that the day was breaking, and Carrie standing over her, with burning eyes, dishevelled hair, and little Mary in her arms.

“Rise, Gartha, oh, Gartha, fly; oh, my friend, save them both. Do not let their blood fall on the head of my child, do not let her father spill the blood of Nelson; do not let Nelson stain his hands with the blood of my child’s father. I could not bear it, it would place an impassable gulf between us all the years of our lives. Oh, Gartha, morning star, my good angel, you alone can stop this wretched duel. Charlotte says it is to take place on the hill back of the little church, at sunrise. Frank overheard the conversation in the library. I would rather Nelson should fall, than he should be the slayer of my child’s father; you know why.”

Gartha jumped from her couch, pale as the robe she wore, and stood for a second silent with arms raised above her head; then, as if putting sleep aside, she cried: “Nelson, a murderer; Nelson to be shot down as if his life was of no more worth than a wild beast’s. Oh, my Father in Heaven, it must be the work of that bad woman.”

She bound up her hair, picked up a white shawl

that lay across the back of a chair, and threw it around her shoulders, raised the window and stepped out. In a moment she was lost sight of among the trees.

Then Carrie observed a faint glimmer of the sun through the shutters, and she sank down on the floor in a swoon.

Gartha sped on as fast as her fleet limbs could carry her. When she got within fifty paces of the place she saw Nelson and Carst standing face to face. The low eastern sky resembled a rose-tinted sea, dyeing the earth in its glow. Higher and higher the sun ascended like a great dancing ball of orange and faint crimson, in the midst of long waves of pale gold, their edges lined with white feathery fleece. Peacefully beyond lay the sloping hills, sleeping in that indescribable violet-rose light, which is never to be seen only at dawn, and in the early summer season. Peacefully wound the river, onward, onward, like a moving sheet of peach-bloom. "Oh, fair earth, beautiful to behold, have you no power to temper the hearts and passions of men?" cried Gartha, as her eyes drank in all this glory. She came upon them unpercieved, just as the seconds were handing them their weapons, and stepped like a white-robed angel of the morning between them. With outstretched arms, she stood like some messenger of the dawn, with all the splendor of the rose and orange light falling about her, falling on her hair, which had partially become unbound, tinging it to a mass of glistening bronze, falling on the faces of the two men, one of them with murder in his



heart, crying for the blood of his opponent. Oh, revenge, what a terrible monster thou art, what deadly sins dost thou not lead to! She stood, her whole body quivering with emotion, at sight of Carst and Nelson, at the grandeur of the scene before her and around her. Then she turned her eyes in pity on Carst.

“Stay thy hand,” she cried, “wouldst you on this fair, peaceful morning, when the earth seems only a fit abode for angels, would you in the presence of that glory,” she pointed to the sun, “a glory that can resemble nothing but the face of God, would you spill the blood of your brother? You want to vindicate your honor; was it honor when you stood before the altar of God, holding the hand that was pure and stainless, plighting vows to love and cherish the young life she was giving into your keeping? Was it honor to deceive her? She may not have given you her first love, but she gave you a body, as pure and white as the orange blossoms that crowned her brow. Was it honor to still continue to deceive your wife, after your marriage, and keep up your associations with the woman who urged your marriage on, when she found she could not prevent it, so that she might have the benefit of your wife’s fortune. And who has ever since incited you on to suspect your wife’s innocence, and by plans and plots, incited you to jealousy, hate, and revenge? And what has she brought you to? Here on this beautiful morning, earth and sky glad with the glory of the rising sun, the orb, which millions of men have fallen prostrate

before ; glad with the voices of the air, singing praises to God, you would stain your hands with blood, that would fall on the head of your child, and innocent wife. Oh," she cried, with uplifted hands, and gazing before her, "call it the code, call it honor, or what you may, it is still murder crying to heaven for vengeance. Man in his arrogance, passions and pride, has no right to take life, which he cannot give." She turned to him again. "Do you call it honor," she went on in still more pleading tones, "to have your wife's unsullied name tossed about from mouth to mouth, from lip to lip, as lightly as a soap-bubble that scatters before it falls ; to have it bandied on the streets, by the fast men about town ; to have it spoken of with a sneer, the significant cough ; to have it the gossip of idle women, the talk of the clubs, heralded by newspapers, until it is the light gibe of every tongue. No, this is not man's honor, it is his vanity, his passions, that cry for revenge. Man's honor is to protect and shield the name of his wife, the mother of his children. If she has wronged him, to still protect and shield her, by never breathing aught against her, by his everlasting silence in regard to her sin. This is man's honor, this is man's bravery, all else is cowardice, a bravado, which comes from a false education, a species of barbarism."

Laurence Carst stood, pale and trembling, the cold steely glitter of his eyes had softened as he gazed upon her, the thin compressed lips had relaxed ; one hand had fallen at his side, while the other toyed nervously with his pistol. Higher and higher, the



sun ascended, stealing up the river banks, making slanting rays and slender, cool shadows, upon long, drowsy streets; creeping into the low windows and doors of small, dingy dwellings; kissing the fair brows and naked feet of the poor children that slept on their sills for air. Dancing along brick walls, and making golden ripples in narrow court-yards, where babes in their innocent glee try to catch at them with tiny hands.

She turned to Nelson and rested her eyes upon his face, those clear, beautiful eyes, which told him how precious his life was to her. He stood calm, cold and determined.

“Look,” she said, pointing to the east, not in the pleading tones she used to Carst, but rather in one of command, “would you, in the midst of all this splendor, the glory of the awakening day, the joy of the morning falling around you, throw away a life with no stain upon it; one that has been all purity and nobility, and so full of promise for the future? Such a life to be snapped from the world and those who love it, to satisfy a bravado, that men call honor? Have you, also the same vanity, which makes men fear to be called cowards, when it is this very fear that makes cowards of them? No, it is not bravery to stand up and be shot down like a wild beast, and dye your hands with the blood of your brother; it is not bravery for one man to challenge another for the wrong committed by a woman. She is no doll, no puppet, but a responsible being, to be held accountable for what she does. Besides, no man’s life is his

to dispose of, it belongs to God. He gave it and He taketh it away." She folded her arms over her bosom, higher and higher the sun rose over the hills, dispelling the mist over the river that danced and rippled in its radiance, over the long line of steamers, that strewn its banks, streaking their masts and tall chimneys, which sent forth clouds of smoke, curling up, up, into the opal haze. Higher and higher it rose, gilding the domes, of stately buildings, of church spires, that gleamed and flashed like scintillating gems; lighting up the stolid faces of groups of workmen, who saw no wonder in that wonder of wonders, sunrise.

She stretched out her arms, looked at Carst then at Nelson, then raised them above her head, clasped her hands, and said, "Peace, I beseech you."

Two shots were fired in the air, two pistols fell to the ground, two hands clasped and Gartha turned quickly and walked towards home. Nelson hurried on his coat, while his companion picked up his weapon; then both stepped into their carriage and gave the man on the box orders to drive them to No. — C street, as quickly as possible.

Carst's second, the stranger, was so dumfounded, that he could do nothing but stare. "By George," he muttered to himself after several minutes, "if it isn't the deucedest, strangest, termination to an affair of honor I ever saw. D—mn me, if it isn't just like women; they will lead a man on to perdition, and when he's on the brink of tumbling right over with his boots on, some one of them, will come along and



pull him out. I wonder where that apparition came from; she was deucedly good looking, anyway, and a man can forgive a woman for much, if she's that. Yes, d—mn me, even for preaching, and spoiling an affair of honor."

Carst did not wait for his companion, but started on down the hill, his carriage stood below to one side, hidden by a large oak tree. He was afraid he would not arrive at home before the city began to awaken. As he walked down the path, many thoughts crowded upon his mind, his whole past rose up before him; how thankful he was that this Gartha, his wife's girl friend, and now doubly so, had saved him; he did not know or believe there was so much goodness and purity in woman. They can be either as high as heaven, or as low as hell. He was determined now to rid himself of the woman who had enslaved him, he hated her, he would defy her, then let her do her worst; he was ready to face the world with his sin. Had he killed this young artist, it would have ruined his whole career, he could never have been elected to congress. Life was never sweeter to him than now; yes, he would from henceforth make the best of his brilliant talents. And there came over him a deep tenderness for his wife and child, a feeling he had never experienced in regard to his wife, took possession of him. Was it love, or something like it? Yes, the other was passion, desire, a frenzied, hateful thing, that had deadened and silenced all the moral force in him. Yes, he would, when he reached home, throw himself at his wife's feet, and beg her forgive-

ness. He had come to the bottom of the hill, and was within a few feet of his carriage, when he tripped and stumbled over a large rock, throwing his chest full force against the trunk of the tree. The two men, his seconds, who were following on behind, saw him fall and heard the report of a pistol, and hurried to his side; he had rolled over on his back, and the blood was oozing from his mouth.

Yes, Laurence Carst was dead, shot to the heart by a ball from a pistol he had concealed in the breast pocket of his coat, in case the one his seconds brought failed to do its deadly work, for he intended to kill Nelson Lawrie. While Nelson, on the other hand, had told his friend that he would snap his pistol in the air; if Carst killed him, it would be all right, and if not, there would be no harm done. Yes, Laurence Carst was dead, dead to his sins, his passions, his worldly ambitions, and the false honor which nothing could appease but the blood of the man who he thought injured him. The eyes that flashed with scorn and hate upon his opponent, and would have taken his life, before Gartha came upon the scene, with as little regret as he would have drank his coffee afterward, will never more look upon a morning so fair, never more on God's beautiful earth. The long aristocratic nose is pinched and sunken, the firm lips are drawn, showing a little of the gleaming white teeth. Let men prate as they may, the wages of sin is death.

The two gentlemen raised Laurence from the ground, and placed him in the carriage, and gave



orders to the driver to keep on the outskirts of the city, and to get to Judge Van Court's residence as quickly as possible.

When they arrived at Forest Grove, the two gentlemen got out to open the gate to let the carriage pass through. As they did the Judge, who had been awakened by his daughter, after she returned home, and had informed her father of the whole proceedings, and what Mrs. Lowell had done in stopping the duel. Though a believer in the code, he was shocked at what Carrie had related, but felt a great relief at the way the affair terminated, as he supposed. When he learned the after result, his dignity and pride left him, he became deadly pale, and seemed to age twenty years. He was not prepared to see the dead body of his son-in-law, and he stood before it white, stunned and speechless. They carried Carst's body to the library and sent for a physician. He found the pistol in the breast pocket of his vest; the ball had penetrated the arteries and lodged in the heart.

The newspapers reported that the Honorable Laurence Carst, a member of the state senate, and nominated for congress, had been out the evening before with a party of friends. It being late when returning home, and not having his own carriage and driver, the party got into a hack; the man on the box, not being acquainted with the suburbs, as he was a stranger in the city, became entangled in the trees in a side road. Finding themselves in this predicament, they concluded to leave the hack and light their cigars, while the driver extricated his horses, and got

them into the main road. During the time Laurence Carst wandered off by himself, and on returning to the carriage, his foot hit against a rock, tripping him over, he fell, striking his chest against a tree trunk, exploding a pistol he carried in the breast pocket of his coat, the ball entering the heart, causing instantaneous death. This was the explanation given to the public, which was true in all respects save the duel. No one outside the parties concerned had heard of the duel, no one then, or ever afterwards, had the least suspicion that anything of the kind had taken place. As there never had been a light word spoken of Mrs. Carst, and very few of her set knew anything of Nelson Lawrie, except through his work and reputation as a painter.

When Carrie left her father's room, she went to her own, and threw herself on a sofa to rest for an hour or two; she had not been there more than ten minutes when she heard a carriage drive up the avenue, and in a few seconds Frank, the butler, knocked at her door and said she was wanted down stairs. She was very quiet, very pale, a little too quiet, when she saw her dead husband, until they told her the particulars. After they had taken him up stairs to his own room and laid him on his own bed, what her thoughts, her feelings were, as she stood over him, pale and cold, with dry, hot eyes, we cannot say; we only know that she sent up a prayer of thanks that it was not Nelson Lawrie's hand that had taken her husband's life. And when little Mary crept into the room, crying, "papa, papa," she picked her up in her arms, kissed her, and



went out and was not seen again until the day of the funeral. After the funeral she retired to her room and was not seen by any in the house for weeks, excepting her father, and Charlotte, who attended upon her.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PEACE MAKERS, AND PEACE BREAKERS.

THREE months have come and gone since they brought Laurence Carst home dead. Forest Grove is again deserted, with the exception of Frank, its black steward, and family. The old mansion stands grim and silent, with bolted doors and barred windows, in the midst of its stately trees, that still ring with the melody of birds. Mrs. Carst, with her father, little Mary and Charlotte, her nurse, left for Europe two months after her husband's death. Carst left a will bequeathing his whole estate to be divided equally between his wife and daughter. The property was heavily mortgaged, as he had raised considerable money on his farms and real estate since his marriage. Little Mrs. Topping accompanied the family, as she found her own country intolerable since she was prevented by the death of Carst, from living in Washington, and meeting those very distinguished foreigners. After Topping's husband's death, she had placed her money in the hands of the Judge to invest, and fortunate for her he belonged to the old régime, who instead of appropriating her fortune to speculation and his own use, had managed it so well that her income was quite large. She did not know



what to do with her two boys, but the Judge came to her aid here. He advised her to send them to college until they were of age, then give them one or two years' travel before they settled down to whatever they desired to follow in the way of business or a profession. Since then there has been a breeze wafted from over the sea that Topping, not finding an easy entrée into the circles of the nobility, as she expected, joined those dear, delightful, soul-inspiring people, "artistic people, people who are so very odd, and clever, you know."

When Carst left the world so unexpectedly, Madame Bogardus' crown was snatched from her brow, and the scepter from her hand, and she fell down, and great was the fall thereof. She fell from her high place, from the throne where she had reigned so long, and not one loyal subject turned a pitying glance upon her. Society, that crowded her balls and receptions, that drank her rare, foreign wines, as lavishly as the common herd drink water, knew her no more; no more than if she had been a crawling worm at their feet. Still, women like Madame Bogardus, are not to be crushed or gotten rid of so easily; no more than any other great evil, society makes for itself. Women like Madame Bogardus are the product of society, society made her, and society must bear the consequences. So Madame Bogardus still continued to live in the old house, she kept away from society for awhile, at least society kept away from her, for society is human if it is thick-skinned. Madame will found another kingdom and make subjects, and many

willing slaves will come and go at her command; she will pursue her way, lower, lower, never a step higher.

Gartha, after the death of Carst, which saddened her for many days, and the feeling of loneliness which followed Carrie's departure for Europe, settled down once again to the old routine life. Still, there was no day passed that she did not visit the cottage. To Peter and Mrs. Lawrie the day would seem a blank, if Gartha did not spend the usual hour or two with them. She had taken something of the place in their hearts, of the gentle daughter who had gone. Her coming was also the bright spot in Carl's afternoons. Sometimes he would walk home with her, carrying in his hand his old and constant companion, his flute. He would often spend the evening, taking tea with them, and after tea, chatting pleasantly on the porch, and playing his favorite airs. It would be hard to divine the place Gartha held in Nelson's mind and heart, since the morning of the duel; he hardly knew himself, she had risen so far above anything he had ever expected, that a life's long homage and reverence could never repay the act. He would never forget that morning, no, not until memory died within him, and his eyes were closed in their long sleep. He was glad he had lived to see it, glad that it had come into his life, so long as there was no slaying done, the scene of the breaking of dawn, could never be effaced from mind or soul. It had shown him also what power women held, for good or evil, over the lives of men. He knew she was not happy with her husband and it grieved his soul to see it; he knew, too, the



shadow which had fallen on her life, had never come without a cause, and that she was too sensible, too womanly, to allow trifles to trouble her. And it was now more than ever apparent that she was extremely wretched; he saw this by her listlessness, the indifference to her home, and all former things of interest.

One day he said to his mother, they were in the studio, having one of their confidential chats, which they were in the habit of indulging in when there was no one by but themselves. "Yes, indeed, mother, I have always felt that Lowell was not the husband for Gartha; still I think when he married her, he was as much in love with her as he could be with any woman."

"My son, it may be a notion of mine, but I do not like that girl, Effie Graham," said Mrs. Lawrie, gazing over her spectacles at her son's back, for he was deep in the composition of a picture. "Young married people should live to themselves; they are happier. Gartha has never mentioned a word of her troubles to me, but lately she seems to be more unhappy than ever."

"I have never met Effie but once; then I had but a glimpse of her side face, as she stood at the gate of the Lowell Cottage, but it struck me that I had seen her before somewhere, either in reality or in my dreams. Still, I shouldn't think the girl would have anything to do with Gartha's troubles."

"It may be all a notion of mine, my son, but if Gartha ever gives me her confidence I will advise her to tell the girl to find another home,"

If Arthur Lowell ever did love his wife, every vestige of it seemed to have disappeared in the last year. The passion, never strong in him, had little by little, day by day, waned, flickered and died. Perhaps he was unconscious of his cool, slighting manner towards her; of at times barely noticing her, when the girl was by; and at other times perfectly ignoring her presence, and giving his attention to Effie. Very often the reason for these slights was a secret revenge for a difference of opinion, some eloquent thoughts spoken because she could no more help speak them than a stream could help flowing. Arthur would not like to have owned to himself that love in him was such a small component. Gartha was his wife, she could not help herself now, she had to grin and bear; besides he had no time for love, or these little courtesies that every wife should expect from a husband, that gild the rough edges, of their daily intercourse and make life sunnier and sweeter for both. Gartha's dislike to Effie had increased; nor could she help it, no matter how hard she tried, or reasoned with herself, that her dislike was wrong.

"Effie is so childish in her ways," she would sometimes say to herself, when smarting under her husband's cold cruelty, "and men are fond of youth, of rambling, chattering women; she amuses him, I suppose, after the day's labor is over."

But when things began to take a more serious shape, and she found Arthur getting further and further away from her, never spending a moment with her, treated by him and Effie as if she had no place in



her home, out to take care of it, she would cry within herself: "Oh, my husband, my love, my love, are you after all but human, the mere man, not the god-like being I made of you, that I set on such a high pedestal, and worshipped? But I must not allow myself to harbor thoughts which are foreign to me; perhaps I ponder too much on these things; perhaps I am too apt to make mountains out of trifles. Lord, I pray Thee give me peace." Thus she questioned herself hour by hour, thus she prayed from her soul. She was a woman with all her intellect and ideality, that needed love, as a rare flower requires tender care and sunlight to bring it to perfection.

Effie Graham had that quick instinct which is inherent in every woman, bad or good, old or young; some more and some less. The instinct that can detect the power and weakness of her sister in the household, and can measure accurately the place she holds in her husband's or lover's affections. In the woman of Effie's type this instinct is more cunning and subtle; she first makes a sure survey of the field, she has to work on, and her vanity lives, feeds, and is nourished upon her triumphs, as step by step, she dethrones her innocent victim. The culmination of Gartha's unhappiness can hardly be called jealousy, the feeling or thing we define as jealousy seems to have its abode in narrow suspicious minds, minds that run in low channels, to have anything to do with so exalted a nature as hers. She was unhappy with Arthur before Effie came to their home, and she and Arthur were strong in their way; but they were hus-

band and wife, and love came in between, pouring its oil on the troubled waters. The love which he flung aside, and regarded as such a trifle, in endeavoring to absorb her individuality, and make it subservient to his will. It was this narrow, practical, dominant nature of Arthur's, which tried to strip her of the ideality and beauty of mind, that he had no sympathy with, and resented when together almost with every breath. Then, when the girl, Effie, appeared on the scene, all her woman's pride rose up, whatever she suffered in private, she would allow no other woman to be the daily witness of her humiliation.

One morning she paid an earlier visit than usual to Tanglewood. Nelson was preparing for another journey to Europe, it was to spend the winter in Paris. Judge Van Court had sent him a pressing invitation to come and take all the good he could out of a winter's sojourn with them. He had rented a villa in the Paris suburbs for himself and family, which meant Mrs. Carst, nurse and child. Gartha stopped in the sitting-room talking with Mrs. Lawrie before going to the studio. Mrs. Lawrie observed the pallor of her face, and the strange expression in her eyes; it was as if all their light had suddenly died out, leaving them cold and hard. Nelson also observed this change, as she came into the studio. She threw herself into a chair and began chatting in a lively, pleasant badinage, saying how awkward men were when they undertook to pack a trunk or valise, and once or twice she laughed, her old, low, sweet laugh; and for a moment the color came to her cheek, and the light



leaped to flame in her eyes. Nelson was kneeling on the floor, looking over some sketches, which he intended to take with him; after a while he turned to an old valise that had done good service the last journey he made abroad, and began picking out old stubs of pencils, pieces of chalk, and rubber, and threw them at her feet. "Keepsakes," he said, laughingly, "something to remember me by when I am out of sight, but I hope, not out of mind. Well, it's all a poor devil of an artist has to give to a friend, or a sweetheart."

Then he threw some papers, on which he had drawn bare outlines, then a few water-colors, and an old sketch-book. "There, you may find something good to look at in that," he said, throwing it in her lap. She picked it up and began turning the leaves; as her eyes chanced to rest on the face of a young girl, in a very picturesque costume, the color faded from her cheek, and she sat like one that had suddenly been bereft of all power of movement, speech or even to see or breathe. Then, bringing all her self-control to bear, she asked, but scarcely above a whisper, holding up to him the open book: "Where did you make that sketch?"

"Is it so pleasing to you?" he said. He had risen and was standing by the window, with his back to her, examining an old water-color sketch, and thinking she had found something which interested her, and in her impulsive way was going to make a few eloquent remarks on its artistic merit. In the meantime he had taken a quick glance at the sketch, but not at Gartha's face. "Do you remember the night, I ex-

pect you do well, you would not be likely to forget anything so important in your life. It was the night Arthur first called at this house; well, you remember I walked down to the heart of the city with him, and parted from him, on the corner of M. and O. streets; as I walked home I passed a well-known concert garden in that vicinity. What a fearful hot night it was. Hearing some good music, I was tempted to go in, (I can never resist the delight it gives me to hear good music,) I found a seat in a secluded nook, where I had a good view of those who were seated around the tables; and as I looked about my eye chanced to rest on that face. Her dress was in harmony with her face, and added a piquancy and picturesqueness to her whole *ensémbles*, which struck my fancy, and I then and there made the drawing. The party was seated near me; her companions were men and women that no man who respected himself would care to meet, let alone a good woman. They were, my Gartha, the sort we call questionable, and I wondered how apparently so much innocence and refinement came to be in that kind of society. I have never had but a glimpse of Effie, but her face, come to think of it now, is the counterpart of that sketch."

"Yes, it is Effie's face," said Gartha, half audibly, rising to her feet, and letting the sketch-book drop from her hands on the floor. Nelson instantly turned towards her; her eyes were closed, her lips ashen, and she stood like one turned to stone.

"Oh, Gartha, Gartha, my love, what is the matter?" cried Nelson, holding out his arms, to keep her from



falling. "Gartha, my dear Gartha, my beautiful Gartha, what troubles you? Confide in me, I would lay down my life to serve you."

"It's all over now, but there is one question I wish to ask you; keep nothing from me, Nelson, that you have any knowledge of concerning this matter? Do you think Arthur ever met those people, or knew anything of Effie's history, before he brought her to our home?"

"I do not think he did, I am sure he did not; it must be as she and Arthur told you, the older woman of the two I saw with her that evening was her aunt, and the other is now her guardian."

"That is all I care to know," she said, holding her hand to her brow, her lips quivering from the pain, which was gnawing at her heart. "Say nothing of this to your mother; I shall see you again before you leave; Arthur and myself will come over this evening."

"Yes, Effie must go," she said to herself, as she walked down the path from Tanglewood, "it would be different if she were poor, besides in the last seven months she has had the best of examples."

When she reached her home, she went to her room; how bright and beautiful it was, so full of the glad morning sunshine. How often had she taken refuge here with book or sewing, from her husband's refined tyranny, that so crushed and lacerated her heart. She threw herself into a chair, and asked if in the long years to come she could bear what she had borne in the last few. She could never live over again the year

that had passed. But she must, she was Arthur's wife, bound to him, pledged to him, at the altar of God, their love had sealed the compact, and no law, no court, no Judge, but death, could break it.

"But, is it my duty to lay my heart at his feet, that he may trample it daily, as mercilessly as he would a crawling worm? This heart so full of love for him, a love that would give up all and every purpose and aim in life; that would make any sacrifice to help him to achieve the goal he wished to reach. A love that would be so happy in his, and that would endure to the end." And there came back to her over the past the echo of the earnest voice of the minister, and she heard again, the clear and distinct words, as on the morning she stood hand in hand with him in the little church, "Until death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance." She rose from her seat, paced the floor up and down, once or twice she stopped, raised her arms above her head, and cried, "Oh, my sister; oh, Mary, sweet spirit, beloved of God, come to me, bring with you from Him, as you are nearer to Him, peace, peace, to my weary soul." She threw herself back into the chair, folded her arms and thus peace came to her for days.

Had Gartha been older and her nature not so intense; had she possessed less of the ideal, she would have seen and known long before that the battle with her husband, in trying to make him recognize her gifts of mind, through her affection and love for him, and vice versa, was at an end; and the stronger and fiercer battle must be fought with herself. Had she



known herself better, known her own strength, the power which is inherent in every woman, (for her love was the dagger which he stabbed her to the heart with hourly, and he cared little how deep it pierced, so that he was the conqueror), she would have day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year, lulled love to sleep, and taken the higher and better thing called "duty," as a guide; then calmness, resignation, tranquillity of mind, would have been hers. And her husband would have found that the weapon he had so long used to stab her with had turned upon himself, and shattered his misused power. And love the jewel, the brightness of which had grown dim by possession, and which he thought such a trifle, would have taken a charm divine.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SEPARATED, BUT STILL BOUND TOGETHER.

ONE morning, a few weeks after Nelson's departure for Europe, Gartha and her family, which still consisted of herself, husband and Effie, were seated at the breakfast table. Gartha rose and went to her room for her handkerchief, leaving Arthur and Effie seated at the table; when she returned to the dining-room, Arthur and Effie had left the table, and were standing on the dining-room porch. As she took her seat again at the table, to finish her coffee, Arthur stepped down to leave for his school; on his way out he tarried to pick a small bouquet of half-blown tea roses, from his wife's favorite bush, and mingled with them some morning-glories that made dashes of varied color up the side of the house. He then returned to the porch, where Effie still stood, and handed her the bouquet. As he waved her a parting adieu, Effie raised the flowers to her lips; it was a coquettish trifle, but trifles like these she had studied to perfection, and of course Arthur considered his part but a simple act of gallantry. Mrs. Lowell from where she was seated saw it all and so could the actors in the little play see her from their place on the porch, and the insult was so deadly to



Gartha that she almost swooned, but she recovered herself, rose and went to her room. She had told Effie a few weeks before that she must find another home. but the girl had treated her request with indifference, as she expected; still, Gartha hoped she would leave without trouble. She had not been in her room long when Ann, the servant, who had lived with her ever since her marriage, knocked at her door and asked if she would please step out to the kitchen a moment, the grocer man was waiting to take her order.

Effie was seated in a low rocking-chair by the window, humming the air of a song, and picking leaf by leaf the roses of her bouquet, and blowing them from her fingers onto the floor. As Gartha passed through the dining-room to the kitchen, Effie's eyes caught the clear, straight gaze of Gartha, and they instantly dropped; yet the girl was to a certain extent unconscious of her offense; as Effie was one of those natures dead to all the delicate sensibilities which make finer natures suffer, from the sense of having given pain to others. As Gartha passed her again on her way back to her room, Effie, with some light word, offered Gartha her mutilated flowers. Gartha recoiled with a shudder, stopping for an instant in the middle of the floor; but it was for an instant only, hardly long enough to be perceived by Effie. But in that instant the girl became the most loathsome thing on earth to her. She would have at any time in her life, and she often did as much, taken by the hand the lowest of her sex, and led them out of their haunts of vice and shame into the light, and the clean and healthful

roadways. But it came over her, and it was the cause of the shudder and recoil, that this girl, young and lovely though she was, was a deadlier foe to society than her sisters who traded daily their bodies, for the damning pittance, the price of their souls. She went to her room, once there the battle began that she must fight over and over, with herself. She prayed for patience, guidance and light to see which path to take that led to freedom and peace. She remained in her room until the sun was low in the heavens.

When her husband came home in the evening, she was awaiting him on the front porch; she greeted him with her usual smile of welcome. We must state here that whatever Effie's coquetting with Arthur might have led to in the future, if there had no climax interfered, he was at this time too cool-headed, to be led away from his work and his dream of success, by any attraction, no matter how great. He was sure of Gartha, a woman like her was not going to give up for trifles, the home and comforts he provided for her, and as for himself, he did not wish any severance of the tie; he could not afford to lose a wife who held such a high place in the community they both moved in. But he would punish her for her resistance and let her see that he was master. And as for Effie she pleased his senses, she was so charming, so full of by-play; it was a recreation to let his fancy drift away with the sportive vagaries of this child woman. These were often his thoughts, therefore Arthur had a deliberate purpose in the course he took with his wife; and he found Effie a convenient instrument to carry



it out, as he supposed. He wished to mould Gartha to his will, to see with his eyes, to breathe through his nostrils; to warp her to his woof. And had he succeeded he could not have loved or respected the pitiable thing he would have fashioned from his own tools.

Gartha talked pleasantly at the dinner table, her mood was gayer than for some days past, and she was kindly attentive to Effie. She was of too large and generous a nature to take the advantage which was hers, to inflict petty annoyance on the girl in her own house. After dinner Gartha went to her room, and seated herself by the west window, which gave her a view of the little church. Long, slender beams of reddish gold illumined its steeple, and fell upon its vine covered sides; the gentle evening breeze stirred their leaves into masses of burnished russet. On a distant tree she heard the soft cooing of the turtle dove, to its mate; ah, she was like it in the constancy of her affection. She sat watching the sun gradually lowering and changing, until only the spire of the little church glimmered in its crimson radiance. She rose and left the room, passed through the hall, out to the front gate, and stood debating with herself, whether to take a run over to Tanglewood. The twilight was slowly receding into the dusk, and her dress which was thin white mull, would be too cool, besides Peter and Mrs. Lawrie retired earlier now than formerly, and she doubted if she would find Carl home.

“Why am I so restless?” she asked herself, “will my

home ever be beautiful to me as in the past? Will nothing still this fierce raging tumult within my breast, will confidence, trust, and peace ever be mine again?" This is not the life I dreamed of in my girlhood; the life my mother had taught me to aim for. As I look back now on my loneliness after the dear face had gone, and the hard, thorny path I would have chosen for myself, by which I hoped to climb to home, love, and eminence. Oh, how sweet it would have been after many years of toil and struggle, to have gained these by the fruits of my own labor. Then I would have never known but gladness, peace, and love, for every human thing. I would never have known this bitterness and pain, this shallowness and deceit, that falls on my heart, and chills it to the marrow. Yet these things cannot be for long, the life current is too strong in me, the healthy blood must flow again."

Oh, poverty art thou such a curse as men would have thee in these days of materialism? The world's work has never been done in the halls and gilded palaces of the rich, but in some small lodging in back streets, by the dim light of the lamp, when the world lay hushed in slumber. Thoughts have been penned which have sunk deep into the hearts of a people, deadened to apathy by suffering, sin, war and pestilence, and stirred them to lives of heroic deeds. It was poverty's pen, which first kindled the flame of liberty in men's hearts, and struck at the tyranny that starved their bodies, sapped their life blood, and shriveled their souls, until hungry eyed, and dark



visaged, they sought like hounds of prey, vengeance; and a whole nation rose up and the multitudes cried for the rights, dignity and freedom of man. It was in poverty that science first lighted its lamp, and swept away ignorance and superstition. It is in a six by ten work-shop that the inventor gives to his country that which brings millions to its coffers, and humanity blessed his name. It is in poverty that the artist's soul is touched with inspiration, and his brain conceives, his hand executes, and works out his thoughts in glowing colors, and he leaves the world richer in its store-house of treasures. It is in an attic that he has beautified by a print and a pot of heliotrope that the poet first sings.

Oh, poet sing your songs, no poverty can prevent your long walks in shady lanes, when the skies are blue and glad, and the tender grass is like down to your feet, and your brow is fanned by the warm breath of spring, the scent of clover, and new mown hay. Then that peaceful hour, fed not with bread, but the food of the spirit, when golden bars slant across the roadway, dotted with daffodils and daisies. When is heard the far-off lowing of cows, on their return home, the music of the gentle winds, sighing through a grove of pines, which is sweeter far than any Æolian harp; when the air resounds with the voices of the heavenly choir, and blends with the rustle of trees. Sing on, oh, poet, for it was poverty that gave us the babe in the manger, the divine incarnation, the light of the

world, the King of Kings, the resurrection and the glory of the life to come.

“Oh, poverty, must I also follow thee in my mission?” she cried within herself, as she turned from her musings and left the gate. She walked down the path, passed the house, and went into the back yard. There stood at the far end to one side in a corner against a wicker fence, which ran along an alley, a large and old worm-eaten elm tree. The dust still lingered, loth to wrap about it the darker mantle of night, and as she neared the tree, which had wide, arching branches, she saw her husband and Effie standing under it. Effie’s head lay upon Arthur’s shoulder, she was crying and his hand stroked her hair; as Gartha drew closer she could hear plainly her sobs, (or her pretended sobs,) and the voice of her husband came to her in distinct tones, and this is what she heard. That he was master in his own house, and that it was more of his wife’s desire to rule, and that she, Effie, could stay as long as he saw fit to have her.

Gartha waited to hear no more, but went as fast as her tottering limbs and heavy feet could carry her to the house, and to her room and locked the door. All was over in that one moment, that one instant, she had made up her mind, nothing now could stop or stay her from her purpose; no doom could make her retrace the step she was about to take. Her husband’s last words was the ball, as it were, which came sizzling with such force against her breast, spat-



tering her heart's blood, and killing all that remained of love and duty to him. She went to her bureau, pulled out the drawers, every article, trinket, every piece of jewelry he had given her in the past years, she took out, wrenched apart and threw them on the floor. She then went to her wardrobe, every garment she had bought, every piece of clothing purchased by his money, she took from their hangings, tore them to shreds and threw them in a pile, not leaving one vestige together of the pretty dresses she had made with her own hands. Her white garden hat and knit shawl (also white) lay on the bed; she picked the shawl up and wrapped it around her shoulders, then her hat; as she went to tie the strings under her chin, she saw the flash of her diamond betrothal ring, she pulled it from her finger and threw it on the pile of clothing. But there was another ring, a plain band of gold; her wedding ring. She stood gazing upon it for a minute or two, then great silent tears came to her relief, and coursed down her cheeks and fell upon it, and the memory of that happy day came back; her wedding day, when she stood, hand in hand, with him at the altar, sacred, holy day, when she gave him the love of her life, her soul. And again the voice of the minister rang in her ear, "Until death us do part."

"Yes," she cried, "until death us do part," brushing the tears from her cheek, "still bound together, we must go, each our separate way, for no law, no court, can sever the tie. Yonder in the little cemetery,

sleeping side by side with Mary, lies the bond of our compact, the bond of nature and of God, my babe."

She turned the light low, went to the window, (it was the same window she flew through that beautiful dawn to the duel grounds,) stepped out and stole along the garden path to the gate, opened it and walked hurriedly away. She walked, not knowing where she went, until she found herself on the highest hill, which lay to the south of Tanglewood; then stood a moment to rest. To the north lay a clear, luminous sky with long waves of dark, reddish golds and purples, fast fading into the gray; to the west the violet tinted heavens with its pale crescent moon gradually lighted its lamps. She looked down towards the City with its long streets lined with gas jets, the red and blue lights of its many moving rail cars flickering and twinkling in the distance. The city with its rush and scramble, its selfishness, avarice and rapaciousness; its poverty and extreme wealth, its sin and the reeking slime of its crimes. There on the hill gazing down on its stately buildings and princely homes, its tall church spires, stood the white clad figure of a woman, looming up in the deepening glow of the horizon. Only a poor, weak woman, with hunger in her heart, a great love killed by treachery, her very wifehood crushed and humiliated by the dominant will of another. Only a woman striving against wrong, against all the conditions and conventions that hedge her in and around. A woman battling for the right, with no voice in the law, yet



held amenable to every jot and tittle of the law; a woman thirsting and reaching after the unattainable. She pointed towards the City. "There, down there," was her thought, "among the by-ways, the back streets, the alleys, there among the children of the poor, I shall find my mission, my life's work. They will love and follow me, and into their minds I will sow the seeds of honesty, truth and the love of righteousness, and no knowing how many fair blossoms they may bring forth and bloom into beautiful lives." She clasped her hands above her head, and stood like an angel of the night, until the darkness, like the darkness in her heart, fell and closed around her.

## BOOK III.

### CHAPTER I.

POTIPHER JOHN GILPHIN.

ALL day the chill autumn rain beat upon the house-roofs, pitter-pattered on the window-panes, dripped and dripped from the maples and sycamores that lined with curbstones, while their dead leaves shook by the winds, fell silently to the gutter, and were carried by the stream which seemed to run apace with the human stream of the old city, that ebbed and flowed hither and thither, until lost in the grey of the October evening. It beat upon the Levee, that glistened like a road of silver, as it stretched along the Mississippi; upon the decks and sides of the white steamers, which lined its banks, their tall chimneys looming up like phantom ship-masts into the laden sky. It beat soft hushed tattoos, on the flat-boats and barges that rose and fell, dipped and swipped, with the swell and sway of the river. It swished against the iron shutters of the dingy warehouses, which were massed together like great, frowning fortresses, their dark shadows falling upon and throwing all surrounding objects into gloom. Then the rain and the wind locked arms, and came down



a long narrow alley, blowing a musical whistle, turned a corner and dashed its spray upon a high, grim five-story building, that the electric lights from the bridge spanning the mighty waters flashed full upon its front, showing plainly the letters upon the sign above its doors and windows, which read, "Potipher J. Gilphin & Co., Wholesale & Retail Boat Supplies." Then it blew a sweep of wet drops into the ears and upon the cheek of a man, standing in the doorway. He was giving some orders to the two porters of the place, before leaving for the night. He was a man of medium height, but slender and of almost perfect build; he had not yet passed the boundary line of forty, or forty-two years of age. Though thought and care and the ups and downs of life, the battles which had been fought and won, since the day he left his mother's home, when but a mere urchin, to earn a pittance in the office of a large manufacturing establishment in his own New England Village, had seamed a forehead, where dark blue kindly eyes, set deep under dark, square brows, and character marked every line of his plain face. Before leaving, he took the sleeve of a light gray overcoat, which he held thrown over his right arm, and drew it up over his left arm, which we are sorry to say was handless; then, with a quick motion, he thrust his right arm into the right sleeve, buttoned it across his chest, and stepped out into the rainy October night.

The reader may think that Potipher John Gilphin, with his unprepossessing name, his slight stature, his handless left arm and plain but interesting face, will

be anything but an attractive personage—as he will figure prominently in this history, from now until its close. I assure you, dear reader, if you care for nature, the natural homely life around us, for men and women, who live, breathe and have their being; and for a man like yourself, who has stood resolute in climbing life's hill; who has suffered its pains, borne its sorrows; felt its poetry, tasted of its joys and loves, I am sure you will like Potipher John Gilphin. Yes, from the day when sixteen years old, when an apprentice in the machine shop of the establishment where he first went as an office boy at the age of twelve, he had his left hand cut off as clean, from the wrist, as if a surgeon's knife had done it. With the exception of the few months he lay in the hospital, he had with his right hand steadily climbed up the rungs of the ladder of success to a fortune, and the head of the large wholesale and retail firm of Potipher J. Gilphin & Co., Boat supplies, which meant in those days, when the great passenger steamers plied the Mississippi, everything from a hammer and a box of tacks to the finest teas, coffees, sugars, canned and dried fruits; imported liquors, and so forth. To where we see him at two and forty years, standing in the door of his warehouse, the last to leave, with the exception of the two porters and the night watchman, whose business it was to lock up.

Let us precede Potipher Gilphin to his home in the southwest suburbs, he has taken the quickest way to arrive there, that science has yet achieved in street travel, the electric-car. But thought travels faster,



we have but to think and in the twinkle of an eye we are there in mind. But we must state first, as we must also follow the vicissitudes of our heroine, the scenes of this history shift to another part of the old city. I am not going to take you to one of those big, pretentious modern Queen Anne mansions. But you will exclaim, "The writer said, he was a man of fortune." Yes, Potiphar had a good, solid fortune, and a large yearly income from his business; but he was not yet a millionaire. He might by an effort have built himself one of those big mausoleum, anachronisms we see in the west end of our cities, but Potiphar Gilphin was a plain man, and very simple in his tastes, and the house I am going to enter, if you will bear me and Mr. Gilphin company, was located in the southwest suburbs. Some years before this story opens there was dotted here and there upon the hills, and surrounded by spacious grounds, where grand old trees threw their cool shade when the July sun hung hot in the heavens, the cottages and mansions of many of the old residents. Since then a fashionable thoroughfare has been cut through from south to north, breaking off at the south into pretty squares and circles; and running into short streets of a block or two long. Sometimes these were hemmed in by an old house, standing high upon the hill, protected by its park of stately forest trees, sycamores and cedars.

Up one of those delightful little streets, that straggled into a lane, that lost itself in tall elms, which fringed its both sides, Mr. Gilphin turned after leav-

ing the car. On the east side of this lane there was closed in by a picket rail fence a frontage of about two acres, that ran back west about five. The fence was built to shield a thick hedge of sweet-briar, whose branches hung over and twined and interlaced about its pickets, until it seemed to absorb their wood into the wood of its vine, and the old fence was lost in the shrub. Inside the hedge, and far enough away to keep the children from committing theft, the lilac-bushes grew tall, and in spring burst forth in all their violet tints, filling the air about with their perfume. Also the snowballs in their fluffy white purity, and the bridal wreaths, with their long, curly stems, looking like rows of buttons made of creamy curds, all bloomed with the first warm April days. In the center of the fence was a large grated iron gate, which opened into a carriage-way, shaded by tall cedars, and wound through the gently-sloping grounds up to the front of the house, that stood upon a knoll-like hill, and was surrounded by great trees. The house had been built some years and was of gray-stone, with gable roofs, and under its narrow upper story windows were little porticoes, the sides of the first story being broken by bow windows. And in front a wide piazza ran its whole length.

As Potipher Gilphin walked up the path, the wet trees dripped and dripped, the chill winds soughed through their branches and blew their dead leaves at his feet. When he reached the front door he turned his latch-key in the lock, and entered a wide, square hall, where a bronze lamp hung from the ceiling; its



shade of porcelain painted in Arabesque designs, shedding a soft dim light. Its broad old-fashioned stair-way was a delight to the eye, as well as to the artistic sense, and carried one back to the days when men's hearts were large, and incomes small. A few Turkish rugs laid here and there on the polished floor of hardwood. An oak hall tree, its mirror reaching nearly to the cornice, reflected the walls, which were tinted a delicate blue-gray, and on which hung etchings, engravings and a few water colors that were of recent date, but showed care and taste in their selection.

Mr. Gilphin removed his hat, hung it on the hall-tree, then divested himself of his overcoat, parted the drapery of the folding doors leading into the library, and as he entered such a pleasant greeting it gave him. A bright coal fire burned in the deep, broad grate of the old-fashioned mantel-piece of carved mahogany, which caught the reflected flames in its rich dark reddish wood, and threw them out again, in long splotches of light on the polished floor of maple. The room was large and square, with low ceilings and wainscoted in mahogany; a massive mahogany table stood in the center of the floor that was covered with a rich Persian rug. The table was strewn with books, magazines and newspapers. Three book-cases of mahogany were filled with books, and between the panels of the walls hung some gems in water-colors. And standing about were easy chairs, of the same wood, embossed in leather. Mr. Gilphin lighted a bronze lamp of antique workmanship, then a student

lamp of silver, that he placed as near the edge of the table as it could stand with safety; drew up a chair, seated himself, and took from his coat pocket the evening paper, and began to read. In a few minutes there was a faint foot-fall heard on the stairs, the portieres of the library door parted and a small fairy-like creature crept up behind his chair, put her arms about his neck and laid her fair cheek against his. Potipher drew her face down and kissed her brow. She was so slight and dainty that one could hardly say from the first glance whether she was child or woman; but with the second look she impressed one as being even older than her years, which were but a few months over seventeen. Her dark brown hair was gathered into one long, thick braid at the back, and hung down below her waist, where it was fastened at the end with a bow of white satin ribbon. Her dark brows penciled the blue-veined temples and shaded eyes, large and of a deep, purplish blue, that were veiled by long, black lashes. Her retrousé nose gave piquancy to characteristics that were somewhat sensuous, vacillating, but balanced by an intellect above the average girl. All these played hide-and-seek, in the small, pouting mouth, and coquetted with the round, full chin, which kept them in subjection.

“Well, how has my daughter managed to pass this long, rainy day?” asked Mr. Gilphin, removing his glasses, and looking with a tender light in his deep-set eyes, upon the upturned face, beside him.

“Oh, splendidly, papa; it has been a glorious day for doing things, as mamma Marta would say,” she



answered, drawing up a chair to the fire, and seating herself in it. "I studied three hours this morning, then after lunch, I went to Mamma Marta's room and helped her sew on a gown she is making over for me. The rest of the time I filled in reading Goethe's *Elective Affinities*," Elsie laughed a low, soft laugh, and rested one tiny Cinderella foot, shod in a low, patent-leather tie, upon the fender.

"My, what an industrious child, 'Goethe's *Elective Affinities*,' dear me, I fear, if you keep on cramming your young brain with books, whose matter you can hardly digest at your age, you will do so at the expense of that little body of yours. Besides you will leave your poor, ignorant papa away in the back ground."

"Oh, no; you are my own, wise, dear, loving, tender papa, you are my ideal," she said, rising from her seat, "I shall never marry until I find a husband as wise and brave, good, true, and handsome, as my dear father."

There was moisture in Potipher Gilphin's eyes, as he bent and kissed the cheek that nestled close to his. Then the folding-doors that led into the dining-room were thrown open by a young negro man, who announced dinner. He had good features, rather an intelligent face, but black as ebony. He wore a suit of black, a white tie, and white linen jacket, and apron, that came up to his neck, and down to his knees. He parted the portieres and stood by the door until Mr. Gilphin and his daughter passed through to the dining-room.

## CHAPTER II.

### SNOW-BALL HILL, IN ELM LANE.

THE dining-room was large and square in shape like the library. It was furnished in dark oak, and lighted by two bow-windows, which looked out upon the sloping hill, and over a stretch of field, to a grove of great oaks, that lay to the northwest. Mr. Gilphin had lived in the house several years before he bought it, and for some time after he purchased it, without paying much attention to its interior, which was much out of repair, and also its furniture, that was old and scanty. A year after Elsie went to college, one day a man came with Mr. Gilphin's card, and his own, and a note to Martha Hays, to show the man over the house. Martha did so and the following week, he came with a lot of workmen, carpenters and plumbers; then came painters and paper hangers, and the last of all the interior decorators. And when they were all through, which took them months and months, they had turned the old house into a palace fit for fairies to dwell in. While the work was going on, Aunt Cynthia Johnson, an elderly colored woman, who in her capacity of cook, acted also as partial housekeeper, and came to the house with her son, Sam, a few months after the Gilphins moved in, was



full of alarm as to all "Dis tearin' down, an' a fixin' up." She remarked to her son, many times while the work was in progress, with much shaking of her head in an ominous way, "I spec Massa Gilphin knows what he's about." Sam, her son, would say to himself, with a grin, showing his large white teeth, "Ise got de ole woman now, suah, an' when she comes a scoldin' an' a pesterin' dis ere chile, all Ise got to say, 'Mammy Cyntha, better stop dat; Massa Giffin gwyman to fotch in a new mistiss, a wife, as suah as you lib, he is. What you tink all dis fixin' up, an' a goin' on fo'? Jes fo' Miss Elsie; no, sah; no, sah, no; ha, ha, ha. Look out, when de new mistiss come, den you cotch it, suah; den ye'll hab to walk de chalk, ginge blue, den ye'll know what it's to be scolded. Ha, ha, ha.'"

"See, hea, boy, Ise gives ye to undastan' dat Ise a freed pusson, an' if Mista Giffin fotches home a wife, an' Ise done loike her, an' she me, Ise reckon Cyntha Johnson can fine anoder home." And Cyntha would walk away muttering to herself, "Dat it was great foolishness in Massa Giffin, so long as he hab waited all dese yares to tink now ob marryin', when Miss Elsie was grown."

Martha Hays had also many questions and heart throbs, concerning the house renovating, but she put them aside with the thought, whether Mr. Gilphin ever married or not, he would not separate her from his daughter. But three years have gone by since then, and Mr. Gilphin has brought home no wife.

After the interior decorations were finished the

house became quiet again, and the old furniture, which made the rooms look so bare, was put back in its place, Mr. Gilphin seemed not to think any more about it, or its inharmony to the rich, but subdued coloring of the walls and ceilings. Not until several months before Elsie's return from college were the new furnishings completed. The two parlors on the opposite side of the library and dining-room were lovely rooms, symphonies in warm, yellow gray, that blended with violet-blues. The sides were broken by bow windows, the tops of stained glass, and the windows which faced the front of the house reached from the piazza to the ceiling. The draperies were of satin brocade in the warm gray-yellows of the walls, with delicate roses running through them; the furniture being upholstered in the same. And the mantel-piece was of white marble exquisitely cut. Potipher Gilphin had a great love of the beautiful; it was one of the strongest elements in his nature. From childhood up it amounted to a passion with him, although absorbed in business from boyhood, he had taken pains to cultivate, rather than subdue it. A few years before the refurnishing of his house, he began to look about in the bric-a-brac shops, and artists' studios for paintings and curios. But was slow to buy, was eccentric in his ideas and tastes, and took his own way and methods of furnishing his home.

Potipher Gilphin's household consisted of himself and his daughter Elsie, Martha Hays, whom Elsie mentioned as Mamma Martha, and Aunt Cynthia Johnson and her son Samuel, who acted as butler and



steward, to the gray-stone house on Snowball hill, in Elm Lane. Martha Hays had been nurse and mother to Elsie ever since she was a wee doll-like thing of two years. When Martha first made her appearance at Mr. Gilphin's apartments, nearly fifteen years before this history opens, she was a thin, spare woman of forty years, of medium height, dark skinned, and of homely features. But one of those faces where kindness mingled with cheerfulness, and the wholesomeness of her nature, shone and made it good to look upon. Martha was a lonely woman at this time, and had had many of the vicissitudes of life; indeed, its hard side seemed to have been her portion. She had no home, no relatives, only a few friends, scattered here and there over the big city, that she had made in the long years she had plied her needle doing family sewing. She had quite a little sum saved when her health began to fail, but unfortunately, as is often the case, the bank she had her money deposited in failed. Having a fair primary education, she thought she would look about her for a position of a nursery governess, this would take her out in the open air, which the doctor advised her to keep in as much as possible; besides, she might be of great use to some over-worked mother. One morning, on looking through the daily papers, her eyes chanced to rest on this advertisement, "Wanted, a woman between the age of thirty and fifty years, to take entire charge of a little girl two years and a few months old; she must have a plain education, intelligent, a kindly disposition, and of unimpeachable character. Call be-



tween the hours of seven and eight, in the morning, at 142 G. avenue."

When Martha Hays presented herself at 142 G. avenue, the Janitor directed her to Mr. Gilphin's apartments, that were on the second floor. Martha's ring was answered by a middle-aged woman, with a round, pleasant, Irish face, who admitted her, and showed her into the parlor, where she had an interview with Mr. Gilphin, and also little Elsie, who came toddling in after him. When Martha presented her credentials which were her face, and some letters from several old, wealthy families, whose sewing she did for years, and whose names Potipher had a slight acquaintance with, he immediately engaged her, and Martha signed a contract to come that very day.

Now, let us take a glance at Miss Hays, who sits at the foot of the table, and who, for nearly fifteen years, has been an inmate of Potipher Gilphin's home, who, until she was twelve years old, was nurse, teacher, and mother, to his daughter, when she was sent to a young ladies' Academy to day school, where she remained until she was fifteen. Her father then sent her to Vassar, where she returned a graduate in the early summer. There are women who are quite homely in youth, until they reach middle age, when, like a hard russet apple, which has mellowed with time, they grow handsomer as they grow older. Miss Hayes was one of these women. Her black hair was now a lovely iron-gray, which softened her dark, swarthy skin, to a rich olive tint, that was deepened by her brown eyes; where shone sweetness, gen-



tleness and the spirit of a true and loving heart. Her thin, angular figure had filled and rounded, and her black silk dress with its folds of lace at the throat, fitted her to perfection. There is a quiet dignity about her, which has come with the years of secured comfort, an object in life, and the daily duties that were congenial to her; and above all the maternal love, which grew and grew, and wound about her lonely heart.

There was another love that had crept into Martha's heart, and nestled there for years. Do not misunderstand me, dear reader, there was no romance, no passion, in it; nor was Martha's heart disturbed by any such dream; not since long ago, the boy of twenty-two, whispered in her ear, one soft June night, near the shady lagoon, in her own Southern Village, that he loved her; then went to New Orleans, where in a few months the yellow fever broke out, and after heroically nursing his brothers, he fell a victim to the fever himself. This love of Martha's was a deep gratitude, a tender sisterly affection for the man whose home she shared, and had full charge of since they came to live on Snow-ball hill, in Elm Lane; and he had ever treated her with kind thoughtfulness, and courtesy. For Mr. Gilphin, though a plain man, one who had come up from the ranks, was in every sense a gentleman. He was one of those rare men, who are the exception, and not the rule; a man, one may meet once or twice in a lifetime. I have met him, or else I could not tell you about him, and the tragedy which saddened his life for years. But in

the street cars, in rail-carriages, in the rush and bustle of the City streets, it made no difference whether a woman was young or old, ugly or handsome, plainly or well dressed; he was always considerate and polite, and if it came in his way to serve her, he did so, then would turn his back before she had time to thank him.

I think I hear the reader say, if a woman, "I should like to have been the woman this man loved, she must have had a heaven here on earth." Ah, dear reader, strange to say, it was a woman's hand that dealt him the most terrible blow a woman can deal a man who loves her. It was thus that Martha Hays found Potiphar Gilphin, at the age of twenty-six; crushed, wounded, thrown back upon himself, and for weeks and months, the light of his dreams, hopes and aspirations, gone out. With a heart lacerated and smarting under his grief, which blunted and hardened it for days against his poor helpless infant daughter, the child she had deserted. There was but one part of her she left the little thing, and that was her beautiful eyes; in the course of time, these eyes pleaded for little Elsie. (Blessed time, the healer of wounds.) After a year or so Potiphar rose above his grief and pain, took the child to his heart, and bent all his energies and talents to the accumulation of money, as we see he has succeeded at the age of forty-two. Martha had learned from Mary Reardon, the woman who answered her ring, the first morning she came to Mr. Gilphin's apartments, something of the story of Mr. Gilphin's desertion by his wife. Mary Reardon had



lived six months with the Gilphins before little Elsie was born, and remained four years after, until she took a notion to marry.

“Ah, she was a bonnie creature as you’d ever wish to look at,” said Mary, in a low voice, one evening, as she sat in Martha’s cozy room, when Martha had been with them about three or four months, and little Elsie lay asleep in her trundle-bed, “tall an’ slim, an’ graceful as the larch tree that grows up in the hills of Scotland. But so vain an’ giddy, an’ fond of dress and goin’, never satisfied. But you’d never think she’d do the like of what she did, no, never. Mr. Gilphin gave her her own way too much; he was gone all day, a worken hard, an’ I saw things were not goin’ just right mesel, but it was not my place to do or say anything, but just attind to me work. The man she went away with, is a nephew of the head of the big shippin’ house, where Mr. Gilphin is head-bookkeeper, and has charge of all the money. He was a tall, fair, handsome young sprig of a sport; just for all the world like the gentlemen’s sons we see in the ould country, who hang ’round the great ladies, an’ are up to every kind of divilment. He did nothing but dress himsel’ in the latest fashion, an’ spend money like water. He dawdled about her all day, comin’ in the mornin’ an’ stayin’ to lunch, makin’ me lots of work; after lunch taken her to drive in the park, an’ on the Boulevard, an’ to the races an’ matins, that is the theater they have in the afternoons, an’ all such like. But never in the evenin’ when Mr. Gilphin was home.

“Sometimes Mr. Gilphin went to the office at night to work, however, she got word to the other fellow, I na know; but the lad was sure to be here, and Gilphin was sure to find him here with a few others, playin’ cards when he came home. I think, after a bit, her doins an’ carryin’ on began to trouble him. He would come to me in the mornin’ before he left for his place of business, an’ tell me to be sure an’ look after the baby, an’ to let everything else go; but not neglect the baby. Sure, from the day it was born, until the night its mother left home, I had to take entire care of it, an’ do me work besides. The poor little tot, the wee mite, would have died of neglect, the poor, wee bairn. They were married about a year when the baby came, an’ I thought then she’d mend her ways, for she seemed such a harmless thing herself, so soft-eyed, an’ had such a coaxin’, gentle way with her. But, after she had gotten well from her confinement, she pushed the baby aside, an’ never seemed to take notice of it, nor care, sure, whether it lived or died. My heart went out in pity to Mr. Gilphin. I never saw his like for a young man; he was so good, so kind, and patient with her; he shut his eyes to her faults, an’ short-comins, an’ they were many. An’ he was always fetchin’ her somethin’ home, he never seemed to tire of it; an’ if he had known half what I knew he would have killed her; for he’s a terribly determined man when he once makes up his mind. Well, he would na look at the child for a long while, after the night she went away, not until you came, which was three or four months



after her mother's disappearance. An' it's a blessed thing for the poor dear, that she's in such good hands. She needed constant watchin' an' I had my work to do; it was different when she couldn't walk, she'd sleep for hours, an' I could do a great dale while she took her long nap in the mornin'."

"Oh, how could she leave her baby and such a kind husband?" cried Martha, burying her face in her hands, and thinking of her own life, its loneliness, hardships and struggles.

"Yis, an' for such a young sprig of a sport, a dandy scoundrel, who as soon as his fancy wanes, will na care two straws about her, an' no known but what he's left her in the ditch long ere this."

"I'm so glad, papa, that you have gotten home before it began to storm so dreadfully," said Elsie, as flashes of lightning came through the windows and the rain beat on the panes, "Mamma Martha don't like rainy weather. I like a storm and a rainy day, once in a while; I love 'Snow-ball' hill, at all seasons, but strange to say I like it most when it storms and rains. At Vassar the only time I got real homesick was when it stormed, and we had a long, cloudy, rainy day. Then I could see papa sitting alone in the quaint old library, Mamma Marta up stairs in her room, her rocking-chair drawn up by the table, and she seated comfortably reading or sewing. And I could hear old Beppo's heavy tread upon the front porch, and shaking the rain from his shaggy coat, as he sniffed and walked up and down; a way he has of drying himself. Do you believe, papa, he knew

me the day I came home from school, and only seeing me twice in two years; he jumped and whined and cavorted, all over the porch; and carried on in a most unbecoming manner for a dignified dog, as he usually is. And when I seated myself in one of the wicker chairs he came and rubbed his head all over my skirts. I thought he would eat me up. Finally I got him quieted down, and he laid his head on my lap, and looked up in my face, so comically that I had to laugh outright. Then he dropped his under jaw and laughed like he used to when we played and romped together for hours."

"Yes, he missed you greatly, the first two months you left home, when Mr. Gilphin would leave in the morning he would wander up and down the stairs and go into every room in the house, searching for you, and when you were not to be found, he would give up the hunt, come to my room, or wherever I would happen to be sitting, lay his head on my lap, and with tears in his big, brown eyes, seem to ask me where you were, and where had you gone, and what kept you away, and when you would be back? His eyes seemed to ask all this information. I would pat his head, and say you would be home soon, which would apparently comfort him, until the next morning when he would make the same rounds of the house. He kept this up for nearly two months, each time you left home for college."

"By the way, Sam, I haven't seen the old fellow tonight; he generally meets me half-way between the gate and the house," said Mr. Gilphin.



"Law, Massa," said Sam, who stood to Mr. Gilphin's right, listening to all that had been spoken of Beppo, with a broad grin on his black face, "he come home about half hour befo' dinna, an' was mud f'om his ears to de toe ob his hine foot. He'd ben gone all day; dar come some huntas by hea dis mornin', gwayn to de grove, away off yonda 'cross de railroad track, on tother side ob de creek, an' I spec he'd ben wid dem. Cyntha she scold him, tole him to be gone an' go to de creek, an' take a baff, befo' his massa come home. An', law, Massa Giffin, ye jes oughter seed de way he scudded off, ole as he is."

Elsie gave a ringing laugh, Martha's face lighted up in a pleasant smile, and Mr. Gilphin chuckled to himself, at Sam's recital of Beppo's intelligence. Then the door leading into the kitchen opened, and a large, brown Spaniel, with big brown eyes, long, shaggy hair, long ears, and a tail like a curled Ostrich feather entered. He paid no heed to the merriment he gave those who sat around the table, but walked leisurely to Elsie's chair and laid down at her feet.

"Oh, papa, if he hasn't licked himself dry, after his bath; he must have taken it, for there is not a speck of mud on him, and he's as dry as wool." And Elsie pushed her chair back, stooped over and patted the dog on the head, while the others enjoyed a good laugh at Beppo's expense.

"Laws, Miss Elsie, ye oughter hab seed him, when he come home dis evenin', sich a looken scavenger as he was. He jes got wile when de huntas come 'round, an' das got so now da jes whistle fo' him, an' away

wid him ; oh, he's got teribly wile since you ben gone f'om home. It's dat Massa Phill Gresham an' neighbor dat libs down de lane an' up on de Abnue ; he an' some others f'om de city. Beppo, he knows Massa Phill Gresham fo' de las' fou yares, eber since he come to lib in de big house on de Abenue." Sam was interrupted here by ringing of the front door bell.

"Oh, who can it be, to be out in this storm?" cried Elsie, and they all rose from the table and went into the library, Beppo walking by the side of his mistress, as far as the library door, where he turned back and went to the dining-room, where he knew Sam would have a big tin plate of meat for him, and a nice bone to sharpen his teeth on.



### CHAPTER III.

HIS THOUGHTS CAME QUICK AND FAST, AND FLEW  
OVER THE YEARS TO THE GREAT TRAGEDY  
OF HIS LIFE.

MR. GILPHIN stood by the mantel-piece, and was just in the act of scratching a match to light his cigar, for his usual after-dinner smoke, when Sam parted the portières and said, "A lady in de pala to see Massa Giffin." The words had scarcely died on Sam's lips, when Mr. Gilphin turned quickly about and looked at Sam, with a face pale as death, his mouth drawn, as with pain; a strange expression in his eyes, as if he had taken one glance backward to the night, nearly sixteen years before, when, returning home, he entered his wife's room and found it deserted, ransacked of all clothing and valuables; little Elsie asleep in her crib, and his young wife flown. A sort of tremor passed over his whole body, the match and unlighted cigar shook in his hand, as he said, under his breath, more as if he were speaking to himself, "What, a lady to see me, on such a night as this! I can't imagine who it can be; she must have some pressing errand to have brought her out in this storm. Did she give her name?"

"No, sah, but Ise knows she a lady, she so tall an'

fare wid har de colo ob de bronze ob that are lamp."

"That will do, Sam, I will go in and see the lady," he said, as he passed Sam, went into the hall and entered the parlors.

Seated in one of the easy chairs near a center table, and in the shadow of the dim gas-light, was a woman. Upon her head, which was small and of classic grace, she wore a little black bonnet, of capot shape; her dress was of black serge, made walking length, its high neck collar, relieved by a simple band of white linen. A mantle of dark rich fur wrapped her shoulders, and hung in folds about her tall, willowy figure. When Potipher Gilphin entered he rested one quick, penetrating glance upon her, as she rose up from her seat, then he stood a second as if rooted to the floor. That brow so fair had been crossed and recrossed by shadows black as night; those eyes, beautiful in their clear, holy light, had shed wells of tears, he knew; the mouth, with its serious tenderness, had often twitched with pain, at the sorrows, wrongs and injustices of the world. And over the whole face was a sadness, sweetened by a peace and rest she had found in the work she felt she was called to do. Potipher Gilphin had never, since grown to manhood, felt the sense of his own plainness as he stood before the peerless and singular beauty of this woman; and for a moment he felt keenly and bitterly his physical deficiencies. How dare he, he thought to himself, small, plain-featured and maimed, let his eyes rest for even a moment in admiration upon this fair goddess, this queenly creature?



But all feeling of inferiority vanished, when Gartha (as the reader, I suppose, has guessed ere this) threw back her mantle, leaned her hand on the table beside her, and looked up with a grave smile and said, "I believe this is Mr. Gilphin." Their eyes met, as she spoke his name, and Potipher, from that moment, knew he had found favor with her. For Gartha saw not only the outward, but the inner man; the spirit had looked beyond the outer covering and mere physical imperfections, and saw more gold than dross. There is a beauty of character which permeates the whole being, leaving its indelible stamp upon the man or woman, fashioning and moulding them, as the years go by, and which no age can eradicate, as it does mere physical perfection. Gartha saw that Potipher Gilphin was no ordinary man, that he, as well as herself, had a history and had tasted of life's joys and sorrows. She read in the broad, seamed forehead, with its scanty locks of brown hair, pushed carelessly back, thought, power of concentration, and that there blended and mingled with this power a certain amount of idealty which gave it a glow and warmth, and that dark shadows had come and gone, leaving their traces behind. Those small, deep-set eyes of blue had a strange sadness in their keen glance, and the mouth with its firm lips, firm almost to severity, she knew could relax to softness and tenderness, where his sympathies and affections were touched.

"Yes, that is my name," he answered, bowing with

courtesy, and beckoning her to be seated, while he took a chair on the opposite side of the table.

"It will be natural for you to suppose, Mr. Gilphin," began Gartha, resting her eyes on the corner of her mantle, which she held in her hand, "that the errand which has brought me here on such a dark and stormy night, must be of importance. My home is in the northern suburbs. I am the president of a home for orphan children," she continued, glancing towards him, "have been for six or seven years its president. We have a small house down town that I give one day in the week to, also one day to the house in the country; but to-day, being Friday, was our monthly meeting, when we come together to discuss the affairs of both houses. From certain things which have come to light, concerning the matter, that has given me a great deal of serious worry, much annoyance and pain, I directed my steps here; my carriage awaits me at the door.

"Some six years ago and over, I rented, with two other ladies, a large house in the western suburbs, with the understanding that we were to purchase it at a given time. I suppose you will say it was quite an undertaking for a mere girl, as I was then. It was an old family mansion, with about ten acres of ground. Our purpose was to turn it into a home for children, that we were to conduct under new methods. About six months after we had moved into the house, and which was at the time in a state of chaos, with workmen. There came one evening about twi-



light a carriage to the door, and an elderly negress with a white child in her arms, stepped out, came up the porch steps, and rang the bell and was admitted. The baby was a boy, about six months old, and the colored woman informed me, as I happened to be in the house on that evening, that she had been the child's nurse since it was born. But I could learn nothing from her of the child's parents, or could I elicit any information concerning its mother; nothing but that she was sent to me as the president and director of the home, with the baby and the letter which she handed me would explain all I was to know. I opened the letter and found inclosed a check for one thousand dollars, the check was to be cashed at a certain bank in this city. The letter stated that the thousand dollars and its clothes was all the fortune the little fellow had, and that his mother deemed herself unfit to rear him, that she had heard of me and the home, and the unusual interest I took in children, for one so young; that she sent the baby boy to me, feeling that I would take better care of him than she. She also made the request that I would give it the name of Charles Leighton." At the mention of this name Potiphar Gilphin covered his face with his hands. Deep and painful were the emotions that filled his breast, as his thoughts came quick and fast and flew back over the years, to the tragedy of his life; the deserted room, his deserted child, and dishonored wife, her treachery and shame, and now he asked himself, what was to be the end.

"There was no signature to the letter," continued

Gartha, softly, marking Potipher's agitation. "I could coax no further information about the child and its parents from the woman; she evidently had her instructions to say nothing, and she was faithful to the letter. I took the baby from her; in the meantime the driver of the carriage had brought in a small trunk with the child's clothing. From the first moment I set eyes upon the baby I loved it; it has in the last six years become very dear to me; and more especially in the last two. He has grown to be a beautiful boy, in every sense physically as well as mentally. It is a time when his most troublesome years are past, his most critical ones begin. Now a few weeks ago this same negro woman came to this home, looking for the child, and was sent by the matron to my own home where I had taken Charley over a year before, adopting him with a little girl, left me by her mother when dying. I asked her who sent her, and what her object was in wanting to see him. She replied she came to see him, and if permitted to take him away with her; but just for a few hours, and that she would give her word and her oath that she would return him safely to me inside of four or five hours, and perhaps in less time. I inquired if it were his mother who sent her.

"She said that her orders were not to answer any questions, but to try by all means to fetch back the boy. She begged me hard with tears streaming down her black cheeks for the boy. I told her I could not let her have the boy, not until I saw my attorney. She then went away.



“I paid particular attention to the letter’s C. L. on the thousand dollar check, and wrote them down in my note-book, I keep for such purposes. When I presented the check at the bank the money was to be drawn from after being identified by responsible parties; I had no trouble in getting it cashed. The money was then placed in the bank holding the funds for the Home, for the use of the child, after the form of the probate court, which constituted me its guardian. After the reappearance of the colored nurse, asking for the boy, I went to the bank, in which the thousand dollars had first been deposited, and had a talk with the president, concerning the boy, and the letters C. L. upon the check; he said he would investigate the matter and to call again in about a week. I did so yesterday, the president of the bank informed me he was not at liberty to disclose the full name of the gentleman who had placed the money in the bank, to the infant’s credit, and drew up the note payable to myself. Failing in this, it came to my mind that I had, on looking over the trunk, containing the child’s clothes, which the driver of the carriage had brought in, I had found a lady’s hemstitched handkerchief, with the name embroidered in one corner, ‘Annette Gilphin.’ ”

Potipher Gilphin had sat quietly with bowed head, his cheek resting on his right hand, listening to Gartha’s story of the child, but at the mention of the name of “Annette Gilphin,” he rose to his feet, his face pale, cold and stern, but wearing the marks of great mental anguish. He walked to the window,

came back and stood beside the chair he had just vacated, with his right arm crossed over his breast, his hand clasping the left above the elbow, a habit with him, a way he had of concealing and shielding the maimed arm. As he stood there a second with his eyes resting on the floor, there was a great dignity pervaded his whole person, and it seemed to Gartha he had taken on two feet in height. He raised his hand, pushed back the straggling hair from his brow, turned upon her a glance saddened with the many memories of the past, and said: "I will hear you, finish your story," then seated himself again.

Gartha, while feeling deeply interested, and sympathetically drawn to the man before her, knew now she had found the one who could throw some light on what she sought, and give her some clue to the mystery which surrounded the child's parents; who they were and their names.

"I then went to my attorney," resumed Gartha, "and taking the handkerchief with me which I had put safely away in a box, in my dressing-case, and laid the whole matter before him, with all its details. And the result, your name, place of business and the street and number of your residence. I thought it best to come here and have a private talk with you. Now, Mr. Gilphin, can you give me any information in regard to the boy's parents?"

Potipher rose from his seat again, walked to the front window and back, stood a moment by his chair, in the same position he had assumed before, his right



arm crossed on his breast, his hand clasping the left arm, his head bowed, his shoulders bent, and it seemed to Gartha, who watched him intently, that he had suddenly grown twenty years older.

"Mrs. Lowell," he said, "your story has brought back, or sent me back, over eighteen years, to a youthful romance, love and marriage, of a sacred confidence and faith, betrayal, and final desertion. I was but twenty-three years, when I married Annette Lefarge, a beautiful girl of nearly twenty years. She was of French extraction on her father's side, her mother being purely American, a Southerner of good family. Her father had been a rich planter, before the civil war, and had met with the same fate as many other planters; everything had been swept away. She was an orphan when I made her acquaintance, and resided with an uncle of hers, who died shortly after we married. But I thought, when my eyes first rested upon her, that I had never beheld a being more beautiful to look upon. She was one of the tall, willowy kind, what we men call spirituelle, or at least what men think spirituelle; when they meet one of those long limbed, limp, feline creatures; soft eyed, low voiced, and with a laugh like a musical peel of bells. I felt like an ogre beside her, even my name was a prelude to my physical ugliness. But all I asked was to be allowed to love her, to adore her, to live for her, to work for her, and to die for her, if necessary. I was older for twenty-three than most men are at thirty; I had taken care of myself from a boy twelve years old. I was with a business firm

the office of which I entered at that age, after the death of my mother and had been there five years. During that time I had often expressed a desire to come west. The head of the manufacturing establishment, at whose house I lived and who treated me with fatherly kindness, recommended me to a large business house here. I was but seventeen years of age, at that time, and when I married I had whole charge of a floor, where was sold a certain special goods; and I was receiving as large a salary yearly as any employé in the house, doing that kind of work, besides a percentage on all sales. Well, we were married a year, when a little girl was born to us. During that year, I awakened to the fact that my wife, while beautiful, brilliant, versatile and fascinating, had a habit of constantly prevaricating, exaggerating. She would never tell a straight truth, she took the greatest pains to create things, so as to give them an air of mystery. She was indolent, she hated anything like trouble, care or the least responsibility. She would not willingly hurt a fly, but she would let her baby lie for hours in a cramped position in its crib, until Mary Reardon, a good, faithful woman who kept house for us, would hear its moans, and go to its relief. I was not without knowledge of her faults, and felt keenly disappointed in my ideal, but my great love for her, blinded me to the gravity of them, and I hoped for the best.

“There was at that time, in the business House, which I belonged to, a young man, a nephew of the head of the firm. His father was very rich, but a



close-fisted man, who began the world like myself, a poor boy. Being advanced in years, he had retired from active business, but was in reality the moneyed man of the house. After a two years' sojourn in Europe, where he went after leaving college, this son had been placed with us to learn the business; he was one of the salesmen in my department. He was a handsome, splendid looking specimen of young manhood; well educated, polished, affable, and seemed to evince the greatest friendship for myself, which I returned, and felt proud in my heart of his liking. I had on several occasions invited him to our apartments to dinner; I had no fear that he would not be well received, and entertained, for my wife was gifted in that respect. I observed the first evening I brought him to our home, my daughter was then but three months old, he seemed to be very much impressed with my wife's appearance, and asked me the following day, in a joking manner, like young men will, how and where I ever came to find such a beautiful woman for a wife, and if there were any more left of her style of beauty? I had always felt that there was nothing meaner than for a man to coerce his wife's actions; I looked upon it as a sort of petty tyranny. I believed in giving a woman full liberty, trusting to her pride, her good sense of honor, to guide her. While I think this course will succeed nine times out of ten, and make the woman more the man's friend, I was mistaken in Annette.

"In the course of five or six months, in which Charles Leighton had been my guest several times to

dinner, he would be missing from his place in the department for two or three days out of each week. At first we thought nothing of it; he was young, his father wealthy, his uncle the head of the great whole-sale House; it was not expected he would confine himself very closely to business. Finally he left off coming altogether, for what reason I did not for a second suspect, not for months after, did I learn it was to be with Annette.

“He spent all his time with her in my absence. Time and time again I came home and found him there, until I forbid her seeing him. She would make all manner of promises, only to break them when I was out of sight. At last I had to threaten both her and him, that if I came home and found him in my house I would kill him on sight. Divorces in those days were in bad odor, and I was young and trying to gain a foot-hold among men. It was only the day before the elopement that she promised me never to see Charles Leighton again. That evening I went back to the office; I had the books to look over; I had also in my charge all the funds of the floor. When I returned to my apartments, about half past ten, I found her room ransacked of all her clothing, jewels and several large trunks gone, and little Elsie lay asleep in her crib. I went into the hall to call Mary Reardon, as I did she came in with her bonnet on, carrying her mantle on her arm. Annette had sent her on an errand and she had stopped on the way to see a sick woman friend. She could tell me nothing; she knew nothing, only that she had put



Elsie to sleep and had left Annette in her room alone, when she went out. It is just fifteen years ago to-night, the very date of the month, she left her home, husband and child. What a strange coincidence!" he said, rising and walking to the window.

Gartha had listened with deep, painful interest, to every word of the story of Potipher's unfortunate wife. It only differed in certain details from her own sad history, she being the wronged party. It brought back memories of the night when she herself fled from her home and her husband's treachery and heartless persecution; when she stood upon the hill near Tanglewood, looking down upon the city, and not knowing which way to turn her weary feet. For a great darkness had fallen upon her heart, and it was not until she prayed for light that light was given her.

"I am almost confident," continued Potipher, coming back from the window and standing by the table, the vertical lines of his forehead drawn with pain, as he looked at Gartha, who sat with bowed head, her cheek as white as the dainty cambric handkerchief she held to her eyes, "that the boy child you have reared so tenderly and love, is Annette Lefarge's son. I cannot say that Charles Leighton is his father; I supposed he had thrown her off, long ere this. When they eloped they went to Europe. A few years after I heard that his father was so outraged at his son's behavior that he gave him a large sum of money on condition he would live abroad, and make no further claim upon him or his estate. Annette has

never applied for a divorce; she shall never get one. if I can help it. I made application and got an absolute divorce from her eight years ago. My daughter was getting to an age that, if her mother should return, I wanted to cut off all claim that she would have in the law to her, and upon myself and property. For several years after she went away, every night I watched through the long hours, thinking she might repent and return to her home and her child. I would have gladly received her then, though we would have lived as strangers under the same roof. But I waited and watched in vain, and now the last vestige of the old great love I had for her has died. She is nothing to me, the bond of nature which binds mother and child was snapped and broken the night she deserted me and her infant daughter. I repudiate her, the child has never heard of her mother's shame; she has been led to believe her mother died in her infancy. No, I could not now stretch out a hand to help her; no, not if I saw her lying in the gutter and gasping for breath; no, no, that is all over and past." He left the table and began walking up and down the floor.

"Mr. Gilphin," said Gartha, rising, "you would forgive your wife, and help her even at this late hour, should she repent and return to you. Oh, if you had ever seen half what I have, in the last two years; if you would go with me into the back, narrow streets of the city, its by-ways, its crowded, dark alleys, where poverty, sin and crime congregate; where the heroines of all the sad stories find themselves sooner



or later; either that or in some gilded palace of shame. Or into one of the many great avenues where great stately houses raise their dark, frowning stone fronts. It is not so easy to gain admittance there, but there are worse sins committed in these luxurious abodes and in garments of purple and fine linen, than in the days of pagan Pompeii, when steeped in the licentiousness that made the fair heavens darken, and the sun, moon and the planets hide their faces for shame. We prate much of the slums, of the big city; we see poverty and sin there in its bald nakedness, but it is not half so offensive to God, as in the gilded palaces, the luxurious boudoir of my mistress, the courtesan.

“These are they who cause the poor wife, in sheer self respect, to leave her marriage bed, choke down her sobs and humiliation, fold her arms about her little children, and take herself and them to live in another part of the house. She fears a scandal, fears to hurt her children, and the man who at the altar promised ‘to love, honor and cherish her until death us do part.’ Yes, if you had seen half what I have seen and know, since the short while I have forgotten self, used my brain, and my eyes to see, my ears to hear, and my hands to do, you would forgive the woman who was your wife; you would try to forget her sin, for it is only in forgiveness we can find rest and happiness. Mr. Gilphin, I have had women lay their head on this shoulder, while with their last breath, their tears streaming down their cheeks, they confessed sins to me that cried to heaven for ven-

geance, and begged God's forgiveness, and died trusting in His son's name and His promise of eternal life. I have had drunkards, dying in the most abject poverty, who first cursed me because I came to save their poor, beaten, hungry, neglected children, and take them to my home. These men and women have held my hand while dying, blessing me for the comfort and peace given them in their last moments; for the belief in the Saviour, whose name, strange as it may seem in these days of schools and churches, they had never heard in their youth; and others called upon it only to blaspheme it. These are the things, Mr. Gilphin, that bring peace and joy in this life and prepare the way of the soul for the future. You must forgive Annette Lefarge." A slight color tinged her cheek as she spoke, and there was great tenderness in her voice.

Potipher Gilphin had no religious beliefs at this time; there was stored away back in his memory the vision of a little boy, four years old, kneeling at his widowed mother's side, where she taught him to lisp the Lord's prayer. Then, later on, of her sending him to Sunday school, to the Methodist chapel, a few blocks from their home, and where he continued to go until she died. After her death the boy had to face the world, and the hard, sterile facts of how to earn his bread and acquire the rudiments of an education. When the day's work was over in the office of his friend, the manufacturer, he went to his little room and pored over his lessons far into the night. He read all the books that at that time came in his



way, and as the years went by, he drifted from one set of ideas to others, formed by newer opinions. From science, which he read deeply, and for a while thought it the key to all knowledge, and would in time unlock all mysteries of the unknown. Then he took up philosophy, and from philosophy, he came to believe that life was a problem not to be solved, a riddle which was not within his reach or province to unravel, but to make the best he could of it, to live so as to make others happy, and in doing so attain to happiness himself.

But as Gartha stood before him, in her black dress, her dark fur mantle falling partially from her sloping shoulders, her bright hair lying in ripples upon the fair forehead, that expressed so much that is inexpressible, she was a revelation to Potipher Gilphin. How came this beautiful woman, whose face was the embodiment of intellectual and spiritual loveliness, and might have been chiseled by the gods, to choose such an obscure life? To work in the slums, the back crowded streets, and dark alleys of the big city? Why, she can scarcely be over twenty-six years of age; yet from what she tells me she has been for over six years at the head of a home for children, organized and conducted by herself. It has been said that men are blind to the true worth and beauty of women. They only see where their fancies lead them. A man would think in this case that from the day she became a woman, and men first rested their eyes upon her, whether poor or rich, the possessor of wealth, position, or rank, they would have wanted to lay it all at

her feet, and to have made her theirs. A King might have put her on a throne, and the honor would have been meager, compared with the delight of knowing she was his. Ah, me, she, too, must have a history, some painful drama, that has turned the flowery paths of her youth into stony roads and its joyous springs into somber channels. These were Potipher's thoughts, as he paced up and down the floor.

"Mr, Gilphin," said Gartha, after a pause, "you will help me find the boy's parents, and if they are the parties wishing to claim him, I would like to be sure before I give him up; indeed, I will not surrender him to any one unless his father or mother. The boy has become very dear to me; I should like to have the guiding of his young life."

Mr. Gilphin stopped pacing the floor, came and stood before her, with bent head, shoulders drooping, his right hand clasping his left arm. "I will do all I can to help you," he answered with a tremor of the lips, as he rested his eyes a moment upon her, "there are ways, and by-ways, and intricacies connected with this story that only I have the clue to. The last six or seven years I have known little of Charles Leighton, or Annette Lefarge's whereabouts, and the last five years I have lost all trace of them. But I will do all I can to help you to discover who it is that lays claim to the boy,—yes, even," he drew himself up, threw back his shoulders, his face was pale, the dark brows knit, and his voice was cold and stern, as he added, "even if the boy should prove to be Annette Lefarge's son."



“I thank you,” said Gartha, drawing her mantle up about her neck, “my carriage awaits me at the door.” He bowed low as she passed him, and followed her to the hall, took her water-proof cloak from the hall rack, handed it to her, opened the hall door, stepped to the carriage with her, and assisted her in. When seated she held out her hand; as it rested for a moment in his, each felt that from that evening until the end of their days; yes, for all time, their lives in some way would be linked together.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MRS. BARTON HAMSTEAD'S RECEPTION.

It was the full winter season, much snow had fallen, a thing quite unusual in our southwestern climate. The night was raw, cold, damp, and foggy; snow, slush and mud was to be met with everywhere upon the city streets; indeed, a very unpleasant January thaw had set in. However, Terrace Q——, with its mansions of Gothic and Queen Ann architecture, its trim lawns and high, white stone steps, (the white stone steps being a feature of the smoky city), were all clean swept and garnished. Terrace Q—— stood a little to the south of the long, fashionable Avenue P——, and ran east and west; it was one of those streets where wealth seeks to get away from the noise and bustle of thoroughfares and the electric car, and build for itself not homes, but big mausoleums, gloomy and stately, but more often gingerly and showy.

Mrs. Barton Hamstead's mansion, No. 12 Terrace Q——, was a great jumble of Queen Ann and Gothic architecture, with a little of the French Chalette mixed in. The outer door, with its panels of stained glass, opened into a wide vestibule with an inner door, leading into a large reception hall. Imported



Turkish rugs lay here and there on its polished floor of oak; its decorations were of bright wall-paper but its silk hangings were of the richest, and a great winding stairway of oak, that might have been a poem in wood from the carver's chisel, but it was not, I am sorry to say. Its posts, railings, balustrades, being turned by machinery, and flavored decidedly, of the planing mill. So, with the mantel-piece, the frame to its broad mirror, was elaborate enough, but it had the stamp of glue and the machine, in the bunches of grapes and pomegranates which adorned it. The large drawing-rooms were more lavish in their display of upholstery, and costly drapery, than rare bronzes, marble groups, vases, fine engravings, paintings, etchings and carvings, and all that requires culture, taste and the genuine love of the arts. It was not that Mrs. Barton Hamstead didn't have money enough to gratify any taste in that line; as the phrase goes, "she had money to burn." She would spend more money in one day for trifles than would furnish her house with all these beautiful and rare art objects, and make some struggling genius happy for months, in the feeling that he was appreciated and was helped to accomplish something in the art world. But the fact is that Mrs. Barton Hamstead was stingy, when it came to buying paintings and other artistic things. "What is the use," she once said to a lady friend, who was praising a young artist's work, after Mrs. Hamstead had moved into her present great mansion, "these things make so little show for the money invested."

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But, on this January night, the Hamstead mansion was ablaze with light, warmth, color and music. It was a feast of roses, roses everywhere the eye glanced; they festooned the stairway, they hung in garlands over the wide doors, they filled big deep bowls that set about in every nook and cranny.

The carriages come and go and empty their loads of human freight, which are bundles of costly lace, satin and jewels. Mrs. Barton Hamstead stood between the folding-doors of the large reception hall, and grand drawing-rooms; she was tall and slim, large boned, narrow shouldered, long waisted and long limbed. She was a splendid model for the modiste's art, just the figure to envelope in the fashionable, soft silks and laces. Her long, thin arms carried well the loose sleeves, and the full berthas of tulle and chiffon gave breadth to her shoulders and hid her long, scrawny neck. Her face was also long and thin, her complexion a pale sallow, but she had considerable art in making up, so that her cheeks blushed with the slightest tinge of rouge. Her hair, in its natural state, was a faded brown, but she had a well trained English maid, who had studied hair dressing in London and under her hands it became as gold, as any new five dollar gold-piece without its shine. Her features were sharp, and so were other things about Mrs. Barton Hamstead; and her eyes were of a light, cold blue. Still, she shone resplendent in her soft India silks, shimmering into shades of pale sea-green, under creamy Honiton lace, as fine as spider webs. Diamonds big as hazel nuts encircled her throat and



her fingers to their first joint. She swayed a large mother-of-pearl and point applique fan, to and fro, as she smiled and bowed to her guests. She made quite a distinguished appearance and stood out brilliant among all that brilliant throng that came to see and be seen.

Mr. Barton Hamstead was low of stature, stout, florid and as corpulent as the big corporation of which he was a member. He was a great feeder, he fed on and off everything feedable, that came in his reach, and nothing that he could squeeze any succulence out of escaped his big pouch. He was bald-headed, had a broad, flat face, keen, cold, blue eyes, a prominent nose, and a mouth that smiled a good deal. He was not at all a Mr. Carker, of Dickens' fame; but he had two rows of equally sound, white teeth that gleamed under a thick, brown mustache, sprinkled with gray. The newspapers, (and they ought to know,) credited him with being doubly and trebly a millionaire. He was a member of a powerful gigantic corporation, also a trust, which dealt in saccharine products; one that held the government as in the hollow of its hand. At least the men who formed it in the reign of Barton Hamstead, the men who had pledged their oath to the people, to serve them and their country's best interests. The Barton Hamsteads are so deeply patriotic, they dearly love the flag of their country, trade of course follows the flag, we can then guess which they love the best, the stars and stripes or the trade it brings.

Mrs. Barton Hamstead was an American by birth,

so were her ancestors, but since her husband's wealth piled up into the millions her tastes and principles were anything but American. Patriotism in her? Of course, she was patriotic, didn't her patriotism, like her husband's, follow the flag; didn't it put millions in her pocket; who wouldn't be patriotic? But how often her long face broke into a smile when alone in her boudoir with her husband, and he dropped any word of remonstrance to her about running over to Europe so much, leaving him alone in the great house.

"Dear me, Bart, how vulgar, the idea of bothering one's self about the mobs in America!"

Mrs. Barton Hamstead spent nearly all her summers abroad, and she did adore the English aristocracy. Lords and Earls, not going so high as Dukes, were her delight. Her two daughters were being educated in France, and while she herself could never hope to be but plain Mrs. Hamstead, who knows, she thought, with two handsome girls, for money, from her standpoint, was a terrible power, and having it so plentiful, there was no knowing where it might land them upon the dizzy heights of social success. If she had her choice she would like to purchase an English estate and live there, but Mr. Hamstead was obliged to live in his own country, especially in winter time, when congress and the senate were in session. Indeed, to do Barton justice, he preferred to live in his own land, and in his own city; he liked to make money and keep one eye open to his interests and the main chance. He liked to hob-nob with congress-



men and senators, and he couldn't see the use of his wife wanting to run across the sea every few months. She had such a splendid home in her own country, he was sure no Lord's or Earl's palace could beat it. Of course, there was age and ancestral pedigree, and many of the old places were fine, but he would buy her a palace at Saratoga or Long Branch, anywhere, if she would just stay home. But he supposed it was the girls that took her scampering off every summer to Europe; there would be trouble in the camp, sure, when the girls came back finished from that French school.

"Bother," he would say to himself, when these thoughts intruded upon him, as he sat at breakfast sipping his coffee, and looked about the table at the vacant seats, "women will have their way, let her manage the social part of the business."

So Mrs. Barton Hamstead had thrown open her big house; it was her first reception since her return home in November. The music pealed forth in sweet strains, blending with the murmur and swell of voices as the throng swayed to and fro, like sea waves, ceding and receding. Mrs. Barton Hamstead's reception was, of course, a great crush, our moneyed aristocracy are not so numerous, and the Mrs. Barton Hamsteads have to fill in with people who no knowing how they get into society, or how they manage to keep in, for they have no legitimate claim to the upper world. But many of this class are decidedly pleasant people, so very interesting, you know, and others really unique, and are capable of

gracing any assemblage. There are those who rightfully belong to what is termed society; they belong there by birth, family, education, wealth. We will see if we can find a few of our acquaintances among the guests.

Standing in the library are a group of several ladies and gentlemen conversing. Mrs. General Campden stands beside her tall, distinguished looking husband; he is one of the most prominent lawyers in the West, and for two or three terms represented his state in the United States Senate, but had for several years been out of politics. Mrs. Campden is of medium height, with exquisite grace in every line of her slender figure. She looked like a blush rose, in her pale pink satin shimmering under lace, old and rare, as the necklace of gems encircling her throat. Her hair is a rich chestnut brown, with a few perceptible silver threads, mixed here and there, for she is now nearing the forties, but not looking it by ten years. Her eyes are a lovely, soft grey, and her face, in its expression, is full of delicacy and womanliness; indeed, it's good to look upon. Her manners are perfect, and in every move and gesture there is the high-bred woman; from the crown of her small, classic head, to the tip of her white-gloved fingers, and from there to the toe of her dainty satin slipper. In every sense she was a true American, her travels abroad never lessened her love for her native land. She aped no false, foolish, silly airs, pertaining to the aristocracy and nobility of other countries. She entertained Lords and Ladies at her home, that was a dream of beauty,



the exponent of her own original taste, but it ended in the courtesy shown them as distinguished strangers and guests. She and her husband were also the friends of art and artists and litterateurs ; and strange to say, ministers of the Gospel, yes, indeed, real live ministers, gifted men, who preached no false fashionable doctrines, but the meek and lowly Christ, and how to try and follow in His steps. There was always a sprinkling of these noted people to be found at her "at homes," and receptions, as Mrs. Topping would say, "Such delightful people, people you know, who are so very odd and clever." And what a pity we haven't more Mrs. General Campdens in our cities and land.

Now let us turn our eyes, and take a glimpse of a Mrs. Calwald and husband. Mrs. Calwald is of another type ; she is of the spreading kind, and her rose-red satin, covered with black thread lace, sweeps off in a long train on the floor. And such an exposé of neck and shoulders, was enough to make a novice in the social world stand and stare. The male sex certainly did, they were so large and white that one expected every moment to see her ample bosom leap out from her extremely low cut corsage. Her dark brown hair was coiled high on top of her head, and combed back from her forehead, leaving just a few frizzes to soften her large face with its prominent features and swarthy, dark skin. In her hand she carried a large, black satin fan, painted all over with bright humming-birds. Everything about Mrs. Calwald was prominent and conspicuous. What a pity

her nature was not big; generally large moulds have large natures. But, while Mrs. Calwald was in a sense small she was not without some good traits; she was coarse, loved gossip and was every inch a snob. Still, withal, she had a certain keen insight into things and character; the peculiarities of people, and dispensing with them in a way of her own. Mr. Calwald was a small man with a bald head, a little weazened face, and small, sharp, black eyes. He was a large manufacturer, and knew how to make the dollars and pile them up, too.

"Just look at the Greysons, Al, if the widow and her two daughters aren't here, and dressed to kill. How do you suppose they manage to keep in society?"

"H'm—yes, nice girls, yes—and the mother a fine woman."

"Why, my dear Almond, they are as poor as church mice, or Job's old proverbial turkey. Why, you know John Greyson had all his wife's money in the bank of which he was trustee and one of the board of managers, when it failed. You know what a terrible crash it was, and how the cashier, Jones, had been speculating with the bank's funds, then escaped to South America with thousands of dollars. And before John Greyson died he had to take a clerkship. Why, you know the whole story better than I."

"Well, well, my dear, I can't help the story; the whole thing was bad business, very bad business, a shocking want of strict attention to business. I suppose the mother is looking around her now for rich



husbands for her daughters. Well, they are well bred girls and so far as family and beauty goes, they can outshine many of their richer sisters. Yes, they are nice girls."

"Pooh! the girls are good looking enough, but I don't think their beauty will kill them. For gracious sake, Al, do look at Freddy Faboul; I do wonder where he got that new outfit from," she continued, glancing to the left of her, her face taking on an expression of surprise and amusement. "It isn't American, certainly; it must be imported, or copied from some London or Parisian actor, or from the portrait of an old Spanish grandee, while he was traveling abroad. My, isn't it swell, though; all the dudes in the house will twirl their mustaches with envy, when they rest their eyes on that get-up."

Freddy Faboul was paying all attention to the prattling of a petite blonde. His dress consisted of black velvet trousers, a low-cut vest, of the same material, a full bosomed shirt front, of the finest linen cambric, and a turned down collar with a white flowing necktie. A drab frock coat of the finest broad-cloth, coming just to his knees, and cut straight around, its trimming being a low rolling collar and broad cuffs of velvet of the same shade as the coat. The lapels reached far back onto the shoulders, giving quite a display of vest and shirt bosom; they were faced with satin, and tapered down to the bottom of the coat. His hands were exquisitely gloved and his boutonnière was a large, white chrysanthemum. This

with his long pointed patent-leather shoes, completed a peculiar toilet, which made him the most conspicuous young gentleman in regard to fashion in the room.

"Wonder how Papa Faboul takes his son Freddy?" went on Mrs. Calwald, her black eyes snapping, her mind still intent on the young man. "Old James Faboul, as you know, Al, is a hard fisted money making American; they say he averages a sound two million. Freddy has done nothing since his return from Europe, where he went after leaving college, but live in upper swelldom, dawdle about the girls, and gain some notoriety for eccentric dressing, that I don't believe is original with him."

"Well, well, my dear, young men like him must have their frolic out. After a while he will settle down and become a good business man like his father. When he's thirty, I'll warrant you, he'll not be seen at a gathering of this kind, wearing a frock coat like that."

Mr. Calwald rose to his feet, patted his sides, fumbled in the left pocket of his swallow-tail, took out his handkerchief and coughed in it.

"H'm—m, the idea of Freddy Faboul ever having the sense of his dad, it shows how short-sighted men are; good thing for him, my dear Al, that the old man lived before him. Frederick's father, feeling the hard grind of his youth, has overdone the thing with his son. Freddy has had too much money to spend, and now it's the grief of the old man that he won't



take to business, and relieve him of some of its cares." And Mrs. Calwald gave two or three wafts to her fan.

"Well, well, my dear, if he has no other bad habits than a little eccentric and extravagant dressing, he will come out all right."

"For gracious goodness sakes, Al, here comes that Miss Effie Graham, and the foreign Count, but don't look just yet. Oh, there's queer stories about them, not coupling their names, but separately. They have both a history. She's an heiress, left rich by an aunt who reared her. They say the aunt was a disreputable old dame, who gambled and gave gentlemen's card parties, where the men played until the 'wee sma' hours' of the morning. The story goes that she was a sharp, unscrupulous woman, made lucky investments in real estate, died rich, and left all her wealth to her niece. All but a small income to the woman who used to live with her, and was her boon companion in all her orgies. She has now reformed and keeps house for Miss Graham and acts the chaperone. Ha, ha, how funny." And Mrs. Calwald laughed, as if she enjoyed the joke society so often plays on itself.

"My dear Ann, what's so funny? I see nothing so very amusing about Miss Graham, save that she's a strikingly handsome girl," said Mr. Calwald, giving a pull to his vest, then taking hold of the lapels of his coat, he began fumbling his boutonnière.

"My dear, Almond, men are so stupid, they never see an inch farther than their noses, unless they scent

money. It's amusing when one thinks how we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. If Miss Effie Graham didn't have a big bank roll, and live in the Weston Villa, do you suppose the Count would care a rap of my fan for her beauty, or that she would be a guest to-night, of Mrs. Barton Hamstead? Not a bit of it, my dear; she has lived but twenty-two or three years, yet they say she has seen much of the shady side of life." And Mrs. Calwald laughed again, waved her fan to and fro, then looked so demure, as the Count and Miss Graham approached.

When they had passed with just the formal bow, she began, her face brightening with keen enjoyment of her subject. "The Count's a fine looking man, he's not young, he must be forty, if he's a day. The story goes that after he left college, he fell in love with a married woman; she was his friend's wife, young and beautiful; they eloped and went to Europe. His father is very wealthy, and after he went away he was so disgusted with him, that he allowed him a sum of money to keep out of the country. Lately the old man died, leaving him out of his will. He was known abroad as the Count Henri de Gascon, and has kept his title here in America. And rumor saith that he is engaged to Miss Graham."

"Well, my dear, what became of the other woman in the case?" asked Mr. Calwald, who generally turned a deaf ear to his wife's gossip, but having an interest in the parties in question, and seeing them standing to his left in the recess of a bow window, where he had a good view of Miss Graham.



"What became of the other woman? Pooh,—just what becomes of every woman who takes that step, with few exceptions. After a while the man tires of her then deserts her, as I suppose it must be in this case. My dear Al, that is man-like."

"Tut, tut, he should have married her."

Mrs. Calwald shook her shoulders. "Come," she said, "let us move on, the dancing begins."

Let us turn our glance upon Miss Graham, as she stands leaning on the arm of the Count Henri de Gascon. We have met Miss Graham before, but our acquaintance with her was not very favorable. To-night we would hardly recognize in this tall, beautiful woman, with a leopard's grace, the Effie Graham of two years before, the wrecker of Gartha Lowell's home; the woman who sent her at night adrift into the streets of the big city, not knowing whither to turn her face to look for shelter. The long, satiny, nut-brown hair, that she used to wear hanging in thick braids down her back, is piled in luxuriant coils on top of her head. The curls on her low, broad brow, contrast with the milky whiteness of her skin, and her cheek round and full, is like a soft piece of pearl velvet, faintly tinged with pink. The dark brows look as if an artist had taken his pencil and with one master stroke made the delicate arched line above the large eyes, of deep grey-blue, that seemed to smoulder in liquid fire, scorching the long, black lashes which veiled them. Her nose was the coarse feature of her face, the tell-tale, as it were, of her low origin. And there is poison lurking in the curves

of the full, red lipped mouth. She was robed in a gown of white satin, covered with costly lace, as soft and foamy as whipped cream, and showed the lines of a figure where the sensuous, indolent grace of the leopard, mingled with the sinuous curves of the serpent. Rows of pearls clasped her throat and her bare shoulders and arms gleamed like ivory with warm opal tints.

The man who stood beside her was just in the prime of life, not over forty, the age when men are at their handsomest. He was of fine physique, with blonde hair, well cut features, somewhat florid now. The eyes were a dark blue, with drooping lids, giving them an amorous expression. A heavy blonde moustache curled over a well-formed mouth, whose smile was pleasant, and showed full, regular white teeth. He had much of the American type about him, but his many years upon the continent of Europe gave him the appearance of a polished gentleman of rank and title. A man of the world, the gambler, the player at *écarté* and *rouge et noir*, the better of high stakes at the Derby, and the reveller at midnight suppers, the gentleman in the drawing-rooms, where he made love to high-bred ladies; the associate of Lords, Earls and Dukes, a sybarite in all his tastes. This was the man known in London and Paris, and since his return to his native land, as the Count Henri de Gascon.

It was over three years and a half since Charles Leighton, under the name of the Count Henri de Gascon, made his appearance in the city of his birth.



His father, a wealthy, retired merchant, died but a few months before, leaving his large estate to be divided equally between his youngest son and daughter, and cutting off his oldest son with but a dollar. The will said that he had given his oldest son two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, after he had left America, on condition that he would remain abroad and make no further claim to his estate. His father had been dead but a few months, when he sailed from Paris for his own country. His two hundred and fifty thousand long before had flown with the winds, but unlike the winds, did not return again, and for some time he had lived upon his credit and his wits. After arriving, he rented bachelor's quarters in a small hotel in the suburbs, and began to quietly contest his father's will. For two years he seldom left his rooms, only at night, and to dine at the restaurant, also to appear once or twice at court. At the end of this period, his fears being somewhat allayed in regard to the woman he had spent thirteen years of his life with, and left behind in Paris, he told himself that she was either dead or had long since given him up and found balm for her desertion, in another man's love. Little by little he began to show himself among men of wealth and position, and was soon introduced to the clubs and society. It was at a reception he met Effie Graham, when his glance first rested upon her, he turned deadly white, and looked like a man ready to swoon, but he rallied, bit his lip, and said to himself: "Bah, she is but a girl; she can't at the most

be over twenty-two years. Annette, if living, is thirty-six or seven."

Up to that evening, Miss Graham, with her many other admirers, had been receiving the attentions of Arthur Lowell. He had lost trace of her for nearly eight or nine months, after she left his home, which she had to do immediately, when he discovered his wife had gone with the shadows of the night before. But when Miss Graham bought, furnished and had been installed in the Weston Villa with her servants and Aunt Madge Morris, she sent an invitation to the professor to meet a few friends at dinner. Arthur Lowell, who was feeling very dull at the time, and being a man who considered himself strong in his own strength, and having in his heart a deep resentment towards all women, as men do who have been most cruel to women, and aware of Effie's power to amuse and fascinate, could see no harm in renewing the acquaintance. He dilly-dallied by her side, evening after evening, thinking every day to break the spell by which she held him. He could not marry her, to marry her would be ruin to him, give truth to the scandal of two years before, and damn him in the eyes of those whose good opinion he cared most for. He would have to give up what he had gained by the slow work of nearly half his youth. But he could no more break the spell by which she held him than the bird can the charm of the eye of the cat, which lures it within reach of its deadly claws.

Effie Graham was one of those women in which the



intellect and spiritual seem dead, but all the passions alive. Not in their coarseness, but in the sensuous love of luxury, ease and pleasure of the appetites, which is more seductive, than in its naked state of animal sensuality. Besides the admiration of men was as essential to her as the food she ate, the breath she breathed; these were what she lived for, thrived and fed upon. The first evening she met the Count de Gascon, and was presented to him under that title, and she saw that he was pleased with her, she drew her Irish point lace opera cloak up about her bare arms and shoulders, and turned her back upon Arthur Lowell, who was dawdling by her side, begging for one caress of her hand. He, with all his proud manhood, followed her about that evening looking like a whipped spaniel, nor could he again attract one glance of her eyes. The professor, though as cold and calculating in his way as Effie, was stung to the quick by her desertion. Since that night the Count had been her devoted slave, her constant companion in her walks, her drives and at the ball, the play, the opera; indeed, he almost lived at her Villa. And now it was rumored that they were engaged, and the beautiful heiress, Miss Effie Graham, was soon to become his wife.

The dancing had commenced, the strains of the waltz floated through the rooms, perfumed with rare exotics, and brilliant with light, color and warmth. The sheen of rich satins and laces, fair throats and white bosoms heaving under their weight of gems that gleamed and flashed, with the rise and fall, the

heave and swell of sighs. The Count places his arm around Effie's waist, and whirls her off in the dance. The Count used to be very fond of the waltz, but men when they reach forty, generally eschew that pleasure, and it was not long until he led Effie to a retired corner where they found a seat.

Did he love her as he bent over her, or in the quick impulsive gesture of his hand, as he reached up to twirl the ends of his mustache, was he trying to brush aside another face, that looked not unlike the one which reclined on the sofa beside him. The face of the woman to whom he swore that night long years before, standing over the crib of her sleeping babe, and pouring hot, passionate words of love in her ear, never, never, to desert her, but to be true to the end, until death alone should part them? No, he does not love Effie Graham, as he loved Annette Gilphin, there is none of the fire and flame, of the youthful passion he had for the woman that he spent thirteen years of his young manhood with. But like all sensual and unlawful love, it soon consumed itself, leaving nothing but dead ashes, where before all was living coals. The Count loved Effie's youth and beauty, but above all her money. From the hour he first met her, and learned that she was an orphan, and rich in her own right, he never lost sight of her. She was the prize that must be won, he would stake all in the race, she must be his. He bent low, took her small gloved hand, heavy with its weight of gems, and pressed a kiss upon it; and told her in low whispers, how fondly, dearly and passionately he loved her; that she



was his star, the radiant queen of his heart, that he never loved woman before as he loved her. She sat by his side in a limp-white heap of shimmering satin and lace; her eye-lids drooping, and the long, black lashes veiling the amorous glances which she turned now and then upon him, as she waved her fan to and fro, in slow undulations.

“Come,” she said, her red lips parting in a smile that showed two rows of pearls, that vied with the pearls which clasped her throat, “there is the supper march; let us take our place in the line.”

The following morning the newspapers gave a glowing account of Mrs. Barton Hamstead’s, of No. 12 Terrace Q——, reception. Among the names of the distinguished guests published, was the Count Henri de Gascon, of Paris, France, who was soon going to wed the beautiful heiress, Miss Effie Graham.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ILL WINDS THAT BLOW SOME ONE GOOD.

WHILE Mrs. Barton Hamstead stood in her great house in Terrace Q——, in the midst of light music, perfumes and roses, Cyrus Alvin, the missionary, was sending another kind of light into the minds, hearts and souls of those who crowded to hear him. When Gartha reached the Mission she could hardly make her way through the crowd, although since Cyrus Alvin came to the city the Mission had been enlarged to twice its former size. But there was a stranger present in the Mission hall that night, who had never been to a Mission before. He came in after Gartha, and a few moments before the sermon commenced, and took a seat near the door. He attracted no little attention from those who were seated about him. Appearance, similarity of dress, occupation and pursuits, give men a similarity of caste; but there was something in the manner, air and physiognomy of Potipher Gilphin which set him apart in a crowd; something unique, besides what we term character. As was stated he was not a believer in any creed, he lived as other men live, who violate no law, and are what are termed good citizens, yet are spiritually dead. But, as he sat listening to Cyrus



Alvin, there came over him something like an awakening of conscience; his life with all its success of wealth, the position he had gained among business men, had been most barren of results. It was true, he had known a great sorrow, and had looked and searched and hoped for even a glimmer of the rest and peace this man preached of, but he had failed to find it.

“What was it,” he asked himself, “that brought these people crowding around this man, that made them sing and shout, and many of their faces shine like glorified beings? They were all poor people, some of them looked very poor, and they seemed the happiest; others, cleanly and better clad, were of a type peculiar to themselves. What was it that made Mrs. Lowell, with her youth and wondrous beauty, renounce the world, where she could have scores of worshippers at her feet, and spend her days and nights in the slums and haunts of sin, hunting and caring for sick, wretched and neglected children? What was it in this man, with his beautiful, spiritual face and features like a cut cameo, his words like an unquenchable flame, burning into men’s hearts, and drawing them in multitudes about him? This man, with his gift of oratory, who could go into the halls of congress, the senate of the United States; but chose rather to go among the masses, the toiling classes, the poor, the depraved, the sin-sick, and gather them in.

“‘Go ye out and gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for the kingdom of heaven is at

hand.' He himself had known poverty; he knew also the value of money; he prided himself on being a just man to his clerks, and all his employes, paying them well for their services, and not exacting long hours of labor. He never refused a beggar that asked for alms, or a poor woman that solicited his aid; still he had never given one dollar to God's treasury, nor a cent to support His gospel. Yes, life must have a deeper meaning, greater significance, than he had ever felt it to have; and he learned from this man that the road to happiness was not in living for one's self or one's family. Yes, he understood a little now, how men could be dead men, though they lived amidst the bustle, traffic and trife of the great city."

After the prayer was ended, he slipped out and made his way to a street corner where several lines of electric cars intersected. He had some time to wait before Gartha made her appearance, which proved to be the person he expected to come that way, to take the cars for her home. As she drew near, he uncovered his head to the frost-biting winds, and bowed low, then held out his hand to lead her over the crossing to the car. But she happened to be going to the Rescue Home, which was but a few blocks on the other side of the Avenue, and she would like him to escort her there if he had no objection.

They turned into a short street, thickly settled by rows of small tenement houses, wedged and crowded together as if for mutual support, so rickety were they. At the terminus of this street, they came to



an open square, not far from the Market Place, in the center of the square, looming up dark and grim, under the starlit heavens, with the age, and smoke of many winters upon it, stood a large three-story, double brick house. Some years before my story opens, it was occupied by the son of the man who built it, and there still clung to it something of its former grandeur, minus the park, which, at that time, took in two or three blocks, now thickly built with small tenements of all descriptions. Its high white stone steps led up to a broad, imposing front door of black walnut, with thick glass panels; this opened into a vestibule where an arched door with stained glass panels led into a long, wide hall, where a broad stairway of the same dark wood wound up to the third story. The parlors were large and spacious, with great, high ceilings, and were divided by folding-doors. The front parlor was used as an office, and general reception room; the back parlor, which was shut off by closing the folding-doors, was used as a sitting-room for the inmates. It was plainly and scantily furnished, yet had an air of comfort. A big heaping coal fire burned in its ample grate, shedding a bright, warm glow over the pretty ingrain carpet. A sofa of black horse-hair stood in one corner, and here and there a couple of upholstered easy-chairs, with a sprinkling of cane rockers. A large table covered with a maroon colored cloth, embroidered in gold thread, a gift from one of the lady patrons, and worked by her own hands, stood in the center of the room. It was strewn with papers, and the best peri-

odicals of a religious character; a Bible bound in morocco holding prominence. A few prints hung on the walls, and a book-case of black walnut stood in a corner opposite the sofa.

Gartha found the parlor occupied by the Matron, and a few of the inmates of the house. Seeing her companion was a gentleman, the Matron, after a few pleasant greetings, left, beckoning the others to follow; for all liked and respected the lovely Mrs. Lowell.

Gartha drew a chair up near the grate for Potipher, who had laid his hat on the table, when he first entered. Gartha threw back her fur mantle and seated herself, Mr. Gilphin's vis-a-vis. Her dark, navy blue dress, with its round bodice, its vest of a rich reddish brown brocade, and high crush collar of the same material, giving a fairer tinge to the fair skin, and her cheek, which the frost had flushed a carnation. A dark blue velvet round hat, with simple trimmings of pheasant wings, turbaned her small, beautiful shaped head, with its wealth of hair, whose color was the deep golden brown we sometimes see in the afterglow of an autumn sunset. As she sat there she laid her cheek upon the palm of her hand, her elbow resting on the arm of her chair. Her eyes were bright, and the long, dark lashes modestly veiled the emotions that stirred their depths. A new hope looked out from them, a new, sweet peace had taken possession of her. All during the fall and winter, she had gone every Wednesday and Friday evening to the Mission to hear Cyrus Alvin



preach. The first time she heard him, what a revelation she thought him, as she sat drinking in his words, still, her spirit was in touch with his. With all her high aims and aspirations, she felt at times to be groping in the dark, to stagger under her self-imposed task. There were days and weeks in which she often feared for herself, feared the faith in her was not always strong enough to battle with the evil which surrounded her on all sides. The thick coat of materialism that clogged the springs of the heart and incased the soul, until it seemed to her there was nothing left but the animal instincts.

This man had opened her understanding, gave her new courage and strengthened her faith, and she drank in great spiritual draughts from his teaching. She knew now why her soul longed, hungered and thirsted for the higher life, the spirituality which she did not quite comprehend. Cyrus Alvin was the man, she had been looking for the ideal man of God; when her eyes first beheld him, standing in the door of the Mission hall, she knew him, spirit spoke to spirit, and under his preaching she had found a great rest and peace, such as she had never dreamed of or thought it possible to attain this side of the grave. For years she had seen him, indeed from her early girlhood, ever since she began to think. He was the man she had prophesied of, that night long ago when she sat beside her friend, Mary Lawrie's bed, at dear old Tanglewood, that happy night, the very night Arthur Lowell had asked her to be his wife. After parting with him she came up-stairs to her friend's

room, her mind, heart and soul, filled with the ecstatic joy of her first maiden love, and the knowledge of being loved by a man, she thought her ideal of all that is strong, gifted, noble and manly. And the sweet sadness which mingled with this great love, as the hopes, doubts and fears of the future rose before her, and in her eloquence she poured forth to Mary, touching upon things spiritual; she said: "A man would rise that would uproot the dead fungus of materialism which was stifling the spiritual growth of the church." This man had come, she felt, in the person of Cyrus Alvin. He had that very night put her own thoughts, though often dim, vague and shapeless, into substance; and they came clothed in language beautiful, clear and distinct to her understanding.

As she sat there for a moment without speaking, Potipher Gilphin looked at her and loved her, with a love newly born; the deep, reverent, abiding love of the mature man, the exceptional man. For few men have this kind of love for women. In all his dreams of an ideal woman, he never imagined such as she. Once more his sky was blue, and flecked with silvery sheened clouds; once more the earth was fair, and glad to him; and life took up a new song, the melody of which was sweet and strange, and a touch of the spirit of God seemed to vibrate down deep into the inner cords of heart and soul, and some of the quickening life was given to him.

"I had no idea there was any such fine old house to be found in this part of the city," said Potipher,



breaking the silence. "It must have been built years ago, and some time since it was used as a family residence."

"It has been used for years as a police station, and now that they have moved to their new quarters, the city rents it to us for a small sum annually. You see what a big, rambling, old place it is, and we find it so hard to keep it heated this cold weather; besides, a great expense. Some nights, when the weather is very cold, we shelter from thirty to forty women and children."

"Can it be possible that there can be so many homeless women and children in this district?" said Potipher, reflectively. "Self preservation is the instinct of everything that lives, and especially human beings, and it seems strange that they do not provide some kind of shelter for the winter. What do these women do in the daytime for a livelihood; have they no occupation?"

"Many are strangers in the city; they drift here from country towns, come with a few dollars in their pockets, thinking to step right into work, without giving any account of themselves or what they are best fitted to do. Then, in a week or two, they have neither money nor work, and make their way here. Some are unfortunate girls, that we lead in from the streets and try to reclaim; others are natural tramps. They work a few weeks here and there, then quit and spend the few dollars they have earned with old cronies; when their money is gone they are destitute, have no work or home. And if any of them have

been here once they come again, and bring some other unfortunate with them. The children are waifs we gather like the girls off the street, and others are brought here by their mothers, who are widows, and go out to work by the day; some of these, I send to the home in the suburbs. The women we shelter here over night, we generally provide them with a cup of coffee and a slice of bread and butter, before starting them out in the morning. Those who can give a pretty good record of themselves we keep until employment can be found for them."

"Mrs. Lowell, after what you have told me you have made me feel that I have lived a very selfish life; it is true, I have been a very busy man, my large business requires my constant attention, but my life has run in a rut, a narrow groove, my heart would have withered and dried up long ago, if it were not for my young daughter; she is the spring that has kept one spot in my breast fresh and green. I have always treated my employes well, paid them generously, and when sick their salaries go on just the same. Yet, Mrs. Lowell, I have never given a dollar to a church, nor to a charity like this, or to art or science. Now that you have brushed the scales from my eyes, and I see new vistas ahead; new fields of interest, new aspirations. Let me, from to-night on, help you in all your undertakings, as I have been trying to help you about the boy, since we first met."

"Yes, what seems strange to me," said Gartha, "is that the black woman has never returned, or can we find any trace of her; or have we received by mail



or person any inquiries concerning the child. What I fear most is that he might be abducted from my home, some time when I am away. Since the black woman made her appearance the second time, I have never let him out of the grounds, and then he is kept within eye range of honest John Farrell, who is an old retainer of the family, and has been with me since I have taken up my residence in my old home. He has orders when I am absent and Charley is at play, to keep a constant watch upon him. When I'm obliged to come to the city, Ann Jordon, my housekeeper, who is about as fond of him as I am myself, takes the best of care of him."

"I have made, or rather have caused to be made in a roundabout way, inquiries concerning the thousand dollar note," said Potípher. "At first the president of the bank was very reticent about the parties drawn upon, but I learned that at the time the money was placed in the bank, to the child's credit, that a man whom I have suspected from the first, was seen in this country and in this city. I am positive from the description given of him, and other incidents touching upon the matter that it was he. Although he claims to be of foreign name and birth. This man is in this city now, but I, and the parties I have at work, have not yet been able to locate him. This man's father died nearly four years since, cutting off his oldest son with but a dollar; he is the oldest son, and is here to contest the will." Potipher Gilphin rose from his seat, stepped to the window; it was a

habit of his to conceal the pain his face might too plainly express.

Gartha rose also and went and stood beside him. "Dear Mr. Gilphin," she said softly, laying her hand gently on his shoulder, "if this man is Charles Leighton, what has become of Annette Lefarge?"

He turned quickly about and looked at her; there were large tears in her eyes. "Yes, it is the oft repeated story," she continued, taking her hand from his shoulder, and standing with bowed head, "it seldom changes. Luxury, extravagance, profligacy, then desertion, cold, hunger, and the street for a bed. Sometimes a worse refuge, a gilded hell, a palace of shame, either that or marriage without benefit of clergy. Yes, Annette Lefarge must also be found."

"Why should you concern yourself about Annette Lefarge?" he asked, with a quiver of the lip, as he looked upon her with worshipful reverence. "This man's desertion of her is but the just retribution of her act. She left home, husband and child, for an illicit love, which is the most cruel and shameful thing a woman can be guilty of."

"Oh, my dear Mr. Gilphin, what of the man; do you hold him blameless? Annette Lefarge must have been blinded by a strong carnal passion which her tempter helped to create. Think of the soft words full of poisoned honey he poured in her ear; the promises he swore to, the sophistry he used in urging her to fling aside all a woman holds dear and sacred: home, husband, children, her honor and chastity. Oh



this terrible carnal passion, which caresses its object to-day and slays it on the morrow. This hideous thing that men give the beautiful name of love. Oh, forgive Annette Lefarge and let us try to find her."

"For my daughter's sake, I will try," he said, bowing low, "but you must help me and teach me how."

The fire in the big, wide grate burned low, casting a pale, reddish glow over the room; its lofty ceilings and elaborate mouldings, a contrast to its poor furnishing. The curtain of the large window by which they stood was drawn up to the top. It looked out on a long stretch of yard, and gave a glimpse of the roofs and chimneys of the small tenements that clustered about it, their smoke curling up like blue spiral threads, which led the eye to gaze on the purple dome above, where the stars peeped out. Then a three-quarter moon glanced over the cornice of the window, and shot a beam of silver through the panes that rested on Potipher's face, and Gartha saw reflected there something that for a moment sent a thrill of joy to her lonely heart, but the next was as if an arrow had pierced it, and she made a brush with her hand across her forehead, as there rose the silent cry, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

We will let the curtain fall for a while upon Potipher and Gartha, and return to the Mission Hall, the crowd had thinned considerably, but some were still testifying to their belief, faith and hope in God. There are two persons seated in one of the long benches in the middle of the room that now claim our attention. One of them is a small woman, her face is

round and full, but looked as if time had pricked, dented and puckered its outer envelope, leaving untouched the sweet springs of the heart, which shone in the kindly grey eyes and the snow white hair, that softened the ruggedness of her features. Her clothes were plain, clean and comfortable; her dark woolen shawl of Scotch plaid wrapped her whole figure, which was as round and plump as her face. Her hands were protected from the cold by black cashmere gloves; and such hands as they were, while large and deeply wrinkled and furrowed hard from toil; yet they told the whole story of her life. They were such clean hands, such industrious hands, that their very nails were worn to the bone. They had for years toiled and battled with poverty, the poverty which is ennobled and made dignified by characters, such as Hetty Connor's, who brings into the conflict a certain sweet poetry.

By her side sat a youth of about twenty-one or two; he bore a strong resemblance to Hetty in many ways, but while she was short, he was tall and had a certain squareness of build, with broad shoulders and brow, with its sweep of dark auburn hair. The keen, honest blue eyes that shone from under them were full of buoyancy and the health, strength of hopeful young manhood. This was Hetty Connor's son, she had married late in life, and her marriage had proved unfortunate, (as a good many marriages do). Her husband, a shiftless fellow, had persuaded her, after idling around for months, to give into his hands all her little, hard-earned savings of years. If she would



just set him up in a small business, what a success he would make of it. So Hetty did fix him up in a nice grocery store; after he took possession of the grocery store he had to keep a drop of the "crature," (the loving name the Irish give whiskey, also a keg of beer on tap). James sat himself down, lord of all he surveyed, then squandered the profits, and in two years drank himself to death, leaving poor Hetty, at the age of thirty-three, with money and grocery store gone down in his big maw, and as Hetty took the six-months old baby boy in her arms, and pressed its wee face to hers, it was not for the brute of a husband that had gone, or the money that made the silent tears course down her cheeks, but the wrong he had done both herself and the child.

As Hetty and her son leave the Mission we will follow on after them to a short street, wedged in between two cross streets. The street ran east and west and was not more than three or four blocks long, where it ended in an alley that led into the main thoroughfare which was the Avenue F. In about the center of the second block that was thickly settled by small tenement houses, was a one-story frame cottage painted white, with green shutters. It had a high gabled roof, that slanted down to a low stoop, which ran across its front, forming a wide porch. It stood back from the street, leaving a yard of about twenty-five feet long, and the same in width. In summer this yard bloomed into an Arcadia of flowers and green things, under those wonderful hands of Hetty Connor's; it was guarded over by one solitary

maple tree which stood as a sentinel inside the little wicker gate, throwing its cool shade along the gravel walk, and at night, sang sweet lullabys, when the soft winds swept through its branches. At the back of this cottage was a long, narrow yard that led to an alley; this was parceled off into a vegetable garden, the other half being closed in by a high wire fence; inside of this fence the old hens laid their eggs and cackled and clucked to their broods of chickens. The roosters crowed and the turkeys gobbled and they kept up a great fuss about nothing, just like the world of men and women, who keep up a great racket and cackle about less things than an egg.

The cottage had four rooms and a half, this half, as Hetty termed it, was a small wing built off the middle room, upon a patch of ground that ran between the cottage and the brick wall of a house that stood at the head of a row of tenements. The room was ten by twelve feet, and had one window facing the front, which looked south, with a window and a door opening into the back yard.

Now, let us enter this room. The floor is bare, with the exception of a strip of bright ingrain carpet laid before the stove, one of those half-parlor and half cook stoves; but the boards of the floor are white and clean enough to eat from. A black walnut bedstead stands in one corner, clean and neatly dressed, with a quilt made of bright patches, (some of Hetty's work), and large feather pillows covered with white muslin shams. A dressing-case of the same wood stands in a recess opposite the front window, and in



the side near the door was an improvised cupboard, screened by red curtains. One large, easy chair and a few cane chairs, an old-fashioned double-leafed table and a sort of half lounge and half cot spread with a gay flowered comfort, occupied the space between the stove and south window. The walls were not papered, but it was a cheerful room by day, the sun shone in the front window, from early morning until it set at night, and now the red glow of the fire in the stove threw fantastic shadows on the furniture, here and there, softening whatever was harsh, and giving it an air of homely comfort. And, though poor, it was not a bad shelter for a cold winter's night.

But who is this seated in the big, easy chair? The beautiful head resting on one of the pillows, with its crown of rich, lustrous, black hair, contrasting with the blue-veined temples and forehead like polished marble. The great, sunken eyes, not like caverns, now emitting fire that burned the long, dark lashes; but peaceful as a limpid stream and soft as a gazelle's. The long, lithe body and poise of the regal head, tell us that it is Annette Lefarge. The woman who, for thirteen years passed on the continent of Europe, as the countess of the Count Henri de Gascon. And who in the opening chapter to this story, we first meet, watching that May evening in the Market Place, for this same Count, to kill him on sight. After her conversion that January night, at the Mission Hall, she went no more out in search of the man, who had deserted her. For a whole week after she lay on

her cot, in the dingy attic room, like one who has come out of a long, high fever, in which the brain and mind had been the victim of all the fierce passions that weigh down, tear and wrench, and at last destroy the soul. All these had died in her, leaving her like an infant newly born; but with a rest that was of heaven, and a touch of the peace that passeth all understanding. Aunt Louise, her maid, looked at her dear Miss Annette during this week, and for months after, with an ashen face, and wonder and awe in her eyes, as she would prepare the little meal and hand her Mistis the dainty cup of tea, she would exclaim inwardly, "Lod, Lod, Di ways am inscrupible!"

Every day, during this week, found Cyrus Alvin at the side of her cot, where he remained an hour or two. Her wonderful conversion had strengthened his own faith, if there could be such a thing, and proven over and over again the scriptural story of Mary Magdalene; besides, it also brought to his mind the words of the apostle Paul to the Galatians, "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who gave himself for me. For if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."—Paul to Timothy.

All the gayety, revelry, dissipation, love, hate, jealousy and the desire for revenge on the man whom she had loved and sacrificed so much for, and would with



her small, white, fragile hand have sent the dagger to his heart's quick, on sight, was all buried; and the man was no more to her now than some actor in life's drama, that seemed so far away, yet in which she herself, side by side with him, had played a part. Yes, the old Annette Lefarge had died, but a new Annette was born.

At the end of the week Cyrus Alvin, who had been looking about for more comfortable quarters, for his convert and her maid, bethought him of Hetty Connor, who was a member of the Mission Hall church. He called upon her one afternoon and related to her some of Mrs. Leighton's story, and what he wished to do. Hetty, who happened to be at the Mission the night of Mrs. Leighton's conversion, was all attention. Indeed, Hetty would be glad to do anything in her power for Mr. Alvin, and showed him the little spare room. "It was never used," she said, "an' the lady is welcome to it, until she can do better." When Cyrus spoke of the rent, she would not listen to anything like accepting rent. The Lord had blessed her in a thousand ways, she replied, and especially in her son, who was doing well, and the little room was but a small offering for all His love and goodness to herself and boy.

When the old colored woman and Mrs. Leighton had domiciled themselves in the wing of Hetty Connor's cottage, Louise was delighted. "It was not jes riches, but it wa' like liben nea white folks agin," she said to her Mistis Annette. And her Mistis astonished her with the interest she took in the room, the

cottage, the flowers, chickens, and above all Hetty Connor and her son. After she had been there five or six days she asked Hetty if she could find her some sewing to do, embroidery or fancy work. She used to be an adept with her needle, (most Southern women are), but it was long ago, she was somewhat out of practice. Still she would soon pick it up, and she knew there must be in a thickly settled neighborhood like the one they lived in, women with large families who could not sew, or would they have time. Hetty found her plenty to do in making little aprons and dresses for children. For nearly two years and a half she would rise at seven in the morning and sew for four or five hours, then lie down upon her cot and read and rest; she read and studied the New Testament in these days, and it became an absorbing interest to her. She had a quick and brilliant mind, and when Cyrus Alvin called, which he did one afternoon in every week, they would converse on certain passages of scripture, for an hour or two, that was profitable to both. Every evening, when the weather permitted, she went to the Mission, and of afternoons Hetty would bring in her sewing and sit an hour with her; this hour had another attraction; it was generally along about three o'clock that Hetty tapped on the little wing door, and Hetty, as she heard the gentle "Come in," held something which was very tempting in those large, busy hands of hers. It was a small tray covered with a napkin, like snow, and held the most delicious cup of fragrant tea, with cream and sugar, a platter of the freshest butter and



two light rolls made and baked by Hetty. Oh, they were the lovely brown of chestnuts, and their meat inside as rich and flaky, and there was something about Annette that the sturdy Hetty took to, I think it was her helplessness, her lingering illness and the soft, lady manners that Mary Reardon spoke of to Martha Hays, that captured Hetty's Christ-loving heart. So this was Annette's life, peaceful, with that peace which the world cannot give, until six months before this chapter opens, when she began to droop rapidly, and three months before she was so ill that Louise thought she was going to die, and she begged so hard to see the boy she left at the asylum when in this country before. For with her new birth there came a great love for the child and a yearning to once more lay eyes on him, and hold him again in her arms, before her final leave-taking of all things earthly, that the old colored woman went to the asylum after the boy, and from there she was sent to Mrs. Lowell's own home, where Gartha refused her permission to take the child out for a few hours; Louise would tell her nothing, holding her mistress's secrets sacred as death itself, and she was faithful to the letter, and spirit.

"What kept you so late, Lou?" she asked as Louise wrapped in a heavy shawl, a wool Nubia tied around her head, carrying a large basket of coal in one hand and a market basket filled with provisions in the other, entered. "You're generally home before dark."

"Ye knows, honey, it's my regula day to wash at dose Simmons folks an' dey hab such a awful big

wash; an' fo' a long time Ise hab a little errend; Ise ben a threatenin' fo' to do, an' so Ise jes made up my mine, an' it laid out dar in de neighborhood, whare Ise woked, dat when Ise got frough I'd jes go an' tend to it. Den, not known how we off fo' cole, though Mrs. Conna's she mighty good about cole an' a keepin' up de fia fo' ye, so Ise jes went to de sto' an' got a basket of cole an' kindlin', an' a few groceries; an' now, honey, Ise hab de wata boilin' in a few seconds, an' make ye a nice pot ob tea, an' a plate ob butta toast. Ye seed Aunt Lou habn't fogot her Mistis yet. No, honey, no, neber ye worry about dis ole woman, fo' yares Ise shared ole Mistis's daughter's riches, ye was mighty good to me, my Miss Annette, an' now, honey, dea, so long as old Aunt Lou is able to earn a crust, she'll shar it wid ole Missus' daughter. We's ben mighty hard up sometimes, but de Lod hab alway provided, an' now since He hab sent Dr. Alvin an' Mrs. Connas we hab nebba wanted."

She had taken off her shawl and Nubia, and put the water on to boil for the tea, and then drew up the table in front of Mrs. Leighton's couch, spread over it a white cloth, one Mrs. Conner gave her; it was patched and darned here and there by Annette's long, slim fingers, and washed white as snow by Aunt Louise, and ironed without a wrinkle. She went to the cupboard, took down the white porcelain cup and saucer, and the little blue delf sugar bowl, the same she had in the tenement house in the alley, filled it with granulated sugar from a paper package she had



in the basket, she brought home with her. She then poured the boiling water on the tea, which she had previously put in a small tin teapot, with just enough water to steep. She took from the basket a large Vienna loaf of bread, cut several slices, opened the stove door, where there was a nice bed of coals, and toasted them and spread them with butter. Aunt Louise's buttered toast, like her coffee, hot biscuit and corn-bread, all the expert cooks of the whole of Europe could not touch. Oh, dear, will we miserable gone mad Americans ever taste the like of such cooking again, in these days of quick meals, and devilish frys, as these old-time blacks gave us? She placed her plate of buttered toast on the table, with a glass of grape jelly, poured out the tea, which Annette rose to sip; then Louise filled her own blue delf cup with tea, put in some cream and sugar, cut a slice of the loaf of bread, buttered it, drew a chair up to the stove, and seated herself on the opposite side from her Mistis in her usual, unselfish way. It was the first mouthful she had eaten since a light lunch at noon.

"Have you ever thought of going to the Home again, Louise, since the day I lay so very ill that you thought I was going to die?" asked Annette, after a silence of some minutes, and venturing to speak on a subject so near her heart.

"Wel, Mistis, honey, as Ise hab sed befo', deys no use bovern about de chile, Ise went to de Home, de las time, as I tole ye, case, honey, ye was so sick an' begged so hard to seed him. Ise thought if Ise jest could fotch him fo' a little while an' lets ye look on

his face once mo', it would console an' comfot ye befo' ye crossed ova to de shinen choa ob de unseen lan'. When Ise got to de Home, whar Ise lef him when he a baby, de Matron sent me to de president's own home whar she hab taken him to raise hersef; an' when Ise seed her, Ise hab nothin' to say, but dis wise, dat I'd like to take de chile away, jes fo' a few hours. Ise could tells nothin', an' explains nothin', an' she'd not gib de chile to me. Ise knows, honey, its mighty hard, but de chile is caed fo', he hab a lovely home, jes like some ob dose ole homes in de Souf, an' de president, as Ise tole ye de fust time, Ise neber seed her like befo', she mo like a gran' lady. Mistis, dea," she said softly, after a pause, and seeing the tears course down Annette's cheek, "what could ye do wid de chile, as Ise hab tole ye befo', honey, ye'd only fotch him to misery. If anyting hoppen to ye, Mistis, dea, what would become ob de chile? So, honey, don' worry yesef, ye's hab jes got ober such a bad spell, an' ye's ben so hopeful an' peaceful, since Mista Alvin come in yere life, dat de good Lod will hab de chile fatched to ye, if it's His will, honey. Jes rest in Him, Mistis, dea."

"You know, Lou, ever since that night, just such a January night as this, I have taken no steps nor put forth no effort to find him; he is in the city, but I shall never disturb him. I have but a short while to live, there is only two things I would like before I die, if it were possible to bring them about. One is to see my son, the other to have my husband's and daughter's forgiveness. I did them a great wrong,



Lou, that night so long ago, it seems now. You remember it well, Lou; I left all for the man who deserted me; I was a bad, thoughtless, pleasure-loving woman."

Aunt Louise sat with her head bowed, her black wrinkled hands clasped together and resting on her lap; a sort of gray pallor overspread her face, as she said, "Ise ben a great sinna, too, Mistis, but Ise ben made so happy, since yere conversion; neba, honey, in de dakest day, an' we hab had many ob dem, did Ise spec de light to come to ye. No, honey, my Miss Annette, neba, neba did Ise dream it wid come to ye. An' now, Mistis, ye hab suah, suah, found de peace, Dr. Alvin tells ob, suah, suah; Ise an eye-witness ob it mysef. An' ye's comfotable an' with his holp an' mine, an' Mrs. Conna's giben us de room free ob rent, we hab kept de wolf fom de doa." And the old black woman bent her head in thanks, and so did Annette Lefarge, once queen of the Bohemian beau-monde of Paris, the gayest city on the continent of Europe.

Before we take leave of Hetty Conner's cottage we must give a peep into the little back kitchen, where is seated Hetty and her son Frank. The kitchen was heated by a large cook-stove that shone in its black polish like a mirror. The stove stood in the center of the hearth of a big open fireplace, and here and there were spread, over the floor, the boards of which were spotlessly clean, strips of bright rag-carpet, made by Hetty's own hands, in her leisure moments. Frank was seated near the stove, one

elbow resting on an old-fashioned double-leafed table of walnut. A Japanese shade covered the large lamp that burned in its center and threw a pinkish glow over all objects in the room; over the big kitchen cupboard that reached nearly to the ceiling, mingling with its soft warmth and adding to it a home-like comfort.

Hetty was seated in an old rocking-chair, she had sat in this chair for many years; indeed, it was almost as old as Hetty herself, and as brown and mellow. Its broad wooden seat had a cushion made of bright worsted patches and padded with cotton. And its high, broad back afforded great rest to Mrs. Connor's chubby form, when tired after the day's work, and the many little household duties were finished. She sat before the stove, with her white head leaning against the back of the rocker, her arms crossed over her bosom, her large hands tucked in the folds of her elbows. Hetty's hands seemed to always want to hide themselves when not at work, as if it were an unpardonable sin not to be busy. As if all at once they became conscious of their roughness, redness and ugliness, and wanted to hide away. When at work they were all right, they were perfectly satisfied. Still, with all their largeness and roughness, they were such nimble, dexterous hands. They feared nothing in the shape of pots, pans and dishes, no matter how fine, and as for scrub-brushes and brooms, they could wield them with any hands that were ever made. They were merciless to dust, which hid in corners, and the long cobwebs that festoon ceilings;



no use trying, they never escaped Hetty's broom. And in the use of garden spade and trowel they were so tender in digging up the earth about the flowers in her garden that they grew and thrived under her care, and at her touch gave out their sweetest perfume. When it came to bread and biscuit-making, raised rolls and baking in general, they defied any hands extant. Yet, for all, Hetty's hands were externally ugly; still they were wonderfully alive, not like many fair, white, jewelled hands, that are really withered, useless, dead hands.

"Well, mother, I was never so surprised in all my life when I looked about me to-night at the Mission and saw sitting to the right of me in a corner near the door, Mr. Gilphin," said Frank, tipping his chair back, and leaning his head against the wall.

"Are you sure it wie him, my bairn?"

"Am I sure it wie him,—well, mother, to ask me such a question, as if I wouldn't know a man that I see a hundred times a day, and every day, since I were a boy fourteen years old. I don't think, mother, I would be likely to be mistaken."

"A man like Mr. Gilphin, my son, who lives on the other side of the city, in the western suburbs, would na want to leave his home a night sa cold as this to come three or four miles to our Mission. An' I think I heard you say that he wa na a believer in any church."

"I only know, mother, what I have heard the clerks and salesmen say, that he don't belong to any church. What his belief is, that is another thing. But a better

man to his employes never lived. Think what a friend he has been to me and to you, mother, through me, although he has never laid eyes on you but once, the morning you came with me to the store; he said to me the day before, after he had engaged me, as I was leaving his office, to be sure and fetch my mother with me in the morning when I came. I can only guess from what Mr. Kerns told me that he just wanted to have a look at you. And every year since I first went into his employ as a little office boy, he has raised my salary and promoted me, and think of him giving me Jim Roger's place. What a pity of poor Jim, and his mother a widow.

"Three times Mr. Gilphin took him back on promises to do better and keep out of bad company; but when he took that five hundred dollars and it was proven that he did, and he finally acknowledged to it, Mr. Gilphin let him go without prosecuting him. Many a man, mother, would have sent him to the pen for much less; but he never spoke of it to any one in his employ; yet, it got out some way. Now, I have a desk in the office of the manager of the third floor; I keep all the order accounts of the floor; I also take the orders from the men, and make change and have charge of the money in that department, until Mr. Kerns comes and counts it over. And all the while, mother, I am gaining in knowledge of the goods, as I hope to become a first-class salesman," said Frank with pride. "I suppose," he continued, a flush rising to his cheek, "that I shall not be sent of errands now to Snow-ball hill, and I shall see Miss



Elsie and her old dog Beppo no more. Oh, mother, Miss Elsie is lovely, such a dainty, fairy-like thing; she is Mr. Gilphin's only child, her mother died when she was a baby, and she has been reared by an elderly lady who takes charge of Mr. Gilphin's house. The first two years I was in the office, Mr. Gilphin used to send me to his house about twice a week with Tom, and a light spring wagon, filled with all sorts of good things, boxes of different kinds of fruit, boxes of nuts and raisins; we got to be such friends, Miss Elsie and myself. One day, a little while before she went away to school, I was sent to Snow-ball hill with the wagon and Tom. I happened to meet her in the grounds as I came from the house, and of course old Beppo was not far off. She asked me to take her for a drive in the spring wagon, and teased me so hard that I told her to jump in, but her father mustn't blame me if I were late back to the store. 'Oh, I will make it all right with papa,' she said. Now, I said, 'where do you want to go?'

" 'Take the road down by the railroad to the pond, and you will see, when we come to it, Beppo give a plunge in,' (for the dog had followed her into the wagon,) 'he can swim like a duck and it's such fun to see him.' When she and the dog got up beside me I whipped up Tom. Tom was a spanken fine horse, and the way he did go; the day was lovely and cool, one of those late September days, that if a fellow has any poetry in his soul he feels glad that he lives. 'Isn't this jolly,' she cried, as we went flying past the trees, on the roadside. When I got back to the store

I told Mr. Gilphin about it. 'Well,' he said, smiling, 'she generally gets everybody about Snow-ball hill to obey her.'

"Then she went away to school, and I thought when she returned a young lady, she wouldn't know me any more, but she happened to get a glimpse of Tom and the wagon, coming up the lane, and if she didn't come bounding out upon the back porch when I drew up before it. Oh, she was so glad to see me, mother, she could hardly make enough of me; she said I had grown so big and manly looking, and when I heard her speak like that I was for a minute I could hardly see; I felt so proud to be so complimented by her." And Frank's broad, handsome face burned with pleasure as he related to his mother Elsie Gilphin's cordial greeting of him, after her long absence at school.

Hetty Conner's heart leaped with love of her son, while her eyes glanced with pride upon his face, which looked so beamingly to hers, but she turned her head to one side and her hands snuggled under her arm-pits as she replied, with a note of sternness in her voice: "You must put Miss Gilphin out of your thoughts; it's na for the like of you to be thinken a her; now that she's a young lady. It wa all well enough when you wa both small to do her a kindness, to amuse an' please her; but now, me son, it's different; you're na anything but a lad yoursel, an' it's time enough these ten year to come to be thinkin' of the lassies."

"Was just telling you, mother, how lovely she is; I can at least have the privilege of admiring her.



Love me, love my dog; I like Mr. Gilphin, and I'm sure I can like his daughter, if I want to. I suppose you will say, mother, if I keep it to myself, but I thought, mother, I would let you into my secret and get you to help me keep it," returned Frank, with a hearty laugh. Then, rising, he went to the stove, lifted one of the lids, poked the fire, and filled the stove with coal from a coal-scuttle standing by; replaced the lid and closed the stove up tight for the night.

"Canna think what brought Mr. Gilphin, if it were he, to the Mission, unless it wa to hear Dr. Alvin preach."

"That is just what brought him, mother," said Frank, standing before her with the coal-scuttle in his hand, the picture of strong, young manhood. "He may have been in the neighborhood; we have a large wholesale trade in our line, with the merchants on the Avenue, he may have been in to see one of his customers, and hearing it was Dr. Alvin's night to preach, he dropped into the Mission. How is Mrs. Leighton off for coal, mother? She mustn't want for any this cold weather; I will take her a big, heaping scuttle full before I go to bed. Have you ever heard anything about her, mother? Who she is, and if she has anybody belonging to her?"

"Not a word, only what Dr. Alvin tole me when he first came to ask me about the room, an' if I would take her until he could find another home. He tole me that she had been a rich lady, a very worldly woman, and he found her an' the ole black woman,

her servant, in a very destitute condition, that the ole black woman wa her mother's slave, an' the lady's nurse from the day she was born, an' she had no support only what the old servant earned by doing a day's work here an' there, or wherever she could get it. An' that her conversion wa a great miracle, an' that God an' His Son wa greatly glorified by it. I canna get a word out of the ole black woman about their past, only that she said she wa' na used to doin' hard work, that she had nothing to do but wait on her Mistress, an' travel about wie her."

"We can't let her be cold or hungry while with us, mother."

"Ah, my bairn, it would be poor return to the Lord for his many blessin's to us," said Hetty, as Frank picked up two large, empty coal buckets and went out to the coal shed and filled them full to the handles. One he carried around to the door of the wing room that led into the back yard. He gave one or two gentle knocks, it was opened softly by Aunt Louise. "A bucket of coal for the morning," said Frank, and hurried away. Then he brought in two for his mother, filled the middle room stove, where Hetty slept, bid his mother good-night, and went to the front room to bed.

"Oh, my bonny boy; the ole sayin', 'It's an ill wind that blows no one good,' my marriage wa my ill wind, but you came wie it, an' what a comfort you be to me, what blessed care you take of me in my ole age. May our Father in heaven take care a you always, an' keep you through your whole life from the



evil winds, that blow about every human being unless good come wie it."

She rose up from her seat, turned round and knelt down by her chair. We will leave her kneeling there, in her black dress, her large hands crossed on her breast, her head thrown back, the bands of white hair, softening her round, wrinkled, but happy face. Her eyes raised to the ceiling, and her lips uttering heartfelt thankfulness to her heavenly Father, giver of all good, for the many blessings of her old age, and asking blessings upon her son, her house and all in it.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD BLACK WOMAN PUSHED HER HOOD BACK OFF HER FACE, AND WHISPERED "MASSA."

To Aunt Louise, who had been an upper servant in the home of her owner, and shared with her white people their comforts, plenty and luxury, and had never in all her life before known what hard work or privation of any kind meant, not even the responsibility of thinking for herself, her present situation was often a Chinese puzzle to her. She could not get it through her head why her young Mistis, her Miss Annette, should be deserted, cast down from her high place, from wealth and luxury, which had always been hers, and which she thought rightfully belonged to her, because from her birth she had never known aught but their environment. The negroes are still children; to them the white man and wealth are synonymous; in trouble, misfortune and poverty they still look to him for help. The reason of this, the white man has stripped the negro and all the dark races of all power and the right of self-reliance, to think, act and judge for themselves; therefore, their utter helplessness. They are not just bought and sold; yet their condition is worse servitude now than before the name of freedom was given them; for the



slave's master will feed and clothe his slaves, while we now take away every resource of advancement and leave them to shift for themselves. The old black woman had studied the matter over in her own mind, studied long, and with a certain shrewdness, which some of the more intelligent of the blacks evince to a great degree. She had all the imagination of her race, with a certain keen observation, and more than the average black servant's intelligence. Serving as maid and companion to her Mistress in all her travels and coming in contact, as she did, with people of the fashionable, smart, fast set, gave her a varied experience, and also sharpened her wits. In going about as she now did from family to family, in the different neighborhoods, she kept her eyes and her ears open, and at last traced the Count Henri de Gascon to his lodgings, which were in a small, quiet, unpretentious hotel, situated, as was said, in the suburbs, and frequented mostly by rich country farmers, coming in and going out, from the city to their homes.

The proprietor saw but little of the Count de Gascon, the gentleman whom his clerks thought a foreigner of some distinction and quiet habits. Once a month, he paid his rent in advance; he ate little at the restaurant of the hotel, so in a sense was a comparative stranger to the proprietor and clerks. The hotel stood upon the corner of a street running east and west, its front faced the south, and one side, the west, which ran back half a block; the ladies' entrance being on the west side. Back of the hotel was a large open

lot, the hotel and the lot taking in the whole block. Aunt Louise was passing here one day, about ten in the morning, when she saw a gentleman coming out of the restaurant, cross the street, and turn up the avenue that led to the western suburbs. The old, black woman nearly fainted, for she had a full view of the Count's face, as he emerged from the door of the restaurant. She would have known him anywhere; his back, height, the swing and grace of his handsome figure, and an elegance peculiar to him, with which she was familiar for years. She drew her sun-bonnet over her forehead, and her shawl up about her neck.

She did not follow him, but went into the hotel office and inquired if a gentleman lived there by the name of Leighton, thinking he would not be apt to give his assumed title in a house of that kind and in his own city. An answer came in the affirmative. Yes, a gentleman by that name had apartments there. She said she would like to be taken to his room, as he had left a bundle of linen to be washed and mended and she had come to get it. This was nothing unusual for colored women to come for gentlemen's washing; indeed, it was quite the custom before laundries became so common, as nearly all family and other washing was done by the black women. The clerk called a bell boy to take her to the gentleman's room, No. 5, on the third floor. When they reached the room, the boy called to the chamber-maid to come and look for the linen, but she was too busy, and told the boy to look himself. The boy saw no



bundle and Louise, having gained her object, said she would come again, and hurried away down the steps.

For nearly a month she loitered about the hotel, waiting and watching for the Count, until she had learned his habits. She found that he generally came in about five o'clock every afternoon, and went out about seven, dressed in full evening toilet. Sometimes an elegant family landau, with livery and all the paraphernalia of wealth waited at the door of the ladies' entrance on him.

On the evening of the day when we are first introduced to Hetty Conner, her cottage, the wing, and its two occupants, in the last chapter, Aunt Louise after finishing her washing, which she did about four o'clock, made her way direct to the hotel. The house she had been working in was in the neighborhood, and she had not far to walk to the hotel; she went straight to the ladies' entrance, told the door-keeper what she wanted, and passed on up the stairs to the third floor, to the Count's room, No. 5. It was the end room in a short hall, which cut off a corner of the long central hall, and was dimly lighted by one gas jet, which burned at the entrance in the main hall.

She half crouched in a dark recess formed by the door of the Count's room and a window at the end, so that those who should happen to pass by in the central hall would not see her. She had not long to wait, in less than ten minutes, the Count made his appearance. He did not observe her, and had just turned the key in the lock of his door when she came from

her hiding place, pushed her hood back off her face, and whispered, "Massa." He stepped a pace or two back, his face a deathly ashen hue, as he gasped, "Louise," then caught her by the shoulders with both hands, wheeled her about and pushed her into the room, took the key from the outside, shut the door, and locked it on the inside, then struck a match and lighted the gas.

"Sacré," he hissed between his teeth, as he removed his hat, and threw it upon the sofa. "Now, in the name of the Seine and Tiber, the seven hills of Rome, the Danube, and every other damnable thing, where did you come from? What brought you here, and where did you leave your Mistress?" He asked all these questions in such a low, hissing voice that they were almost inaudible, and with such a strange look on his handsome face, so unlike its good-natured indolent, careless expression of other days, that the old, black woman for a moment lost her courage, and trembled with fear like a leaf in the wind. "Where is your Mistress?" he repeated. "Is she here, or did you leave her in Paris? Tell me the truth," he cried, seeing that she hesitated, and stepping over to where she stood he took her by the shoulder, "tell me the truth; if you don't I will never let you leave this room alive."

"Oh, Massa, Massa Charley, dat's what Ise come to fine out; Ise trabled all de way f'om Pa'is to fine you an my Miss Annette, an ye means to tells me dat my Miss Annette is not hea wid ye. Oh, Massa, Ise soa tried, so troubled, an' so poare, Ise gone hungry



fo' days an' whole days an' nights, not a spec ob food hab dis ole woman hab to eat. Ise walked fo' miles an' miles, to fine ye an' my Mistis an' ye says she not wid ye."

"Stop, hush; you are lying to me," he cried, catching her by the throat, "now tell me the truth," he hissed, shaking her, "and answer my questions. When did you leave Paris?"

"Honey, Massa Count, Ise ben so troubled, an' so po-are, an' so cole an' hungry, Ise walked so much, an' trabled so far, dat Ise sort ob stupid like an' can't remember; but Ise ben a lookin' an' a lookin' fo ye an' Mistis."

"Did you leave your Mistress in Paris?"

"Did ye, Massa?"

"Answer me one question at a time, and if you don't answer me truthfully I will kill you. Tell me when and what day your Misstress left her apartment in Paris."

"It was dis wise, Massa; when ye'd ben gone a week or two, Miss Annette tole me ye was a comin' home in a few days, an' den we was all gwyen back to oua own country. Ise so glad, massa, as Ise neba could bare fo'eign ways. Den, afta foar or five weeks pass, seein' ye didn't come home, my Miss Annette she grew so pale an' droopy, goin' about de house wid her white lips shet tight, an' a sayin' nuffin, an' my heart a-broken. Den, one monin' I got up de usual time, an' when Ise hab de coffee ready, Ise made de coffee mysef, fo' she hab sent away Jacques an' his Madame, Ise thanked de Lod fo' it. It seem

like ole times to hab dem foeign savents gone, Ise call dem savents, fo' dey was no white folks, no Christians, no did dey speak de Christian language. Ise always did hate foeign ways. Jacques an' his Madame lied an' cheated wid every breaf dey draw, dey cheated my Mistis out ob her eyes, an' stole f'om her whenever dey got de chance. My ole Mistis, Miss Annette's mother, she teached me dat it was wrong to tell a lie an' to cheat."

"Don't want to hear about that now; when you carried the coffee to your Mistress's room did you find her there?"

"No, Massa, she hab gone."

"Gone——," he almost screamed, that is, if a man ever did scream, (I believe they either roar, groan or holler, but whatever noise his highness, the Count, did make, it struck poor Louise dumb with fright, and her face, for a moment became gray as ashes. "Well, go on," he cried, after a long pause, "be quick and tell me what happened?"

"It was dis wise, Massa," replied Louise, rallying from her fright, "Ise wait, an' wait, fo' Mistis to come home, but late in de day, a man come wid a writ, an' sed he hab to take the furniture an' close de 'partments. Ise jes went nearly wile, when Ise heered dat, an' my Miss Annette spirited off in dat way, dat Ise cried mysef sick. Ise tole de folks in de 'partment house, Ise wanted to go back to my own home, an' my own dea lan' an' people; like Ruth in de scripture, Ise wanted to die an' be buried wid my own white folks. Ise hab libed a long time in foeign pa'ts wid



my Mistis, but Ise neba got used to dey ways; Ise wanted to go to my own white people, dat Ise bon among. A gentleman dat knowed ye an' Mistis come an' fotched me to his house, an' de nex day he fotched me to de 'Merican Consol, an' Ise tole him my story. Dat Ise was Miss Annette's savent, an' her mother's savent, an' bon, an' my mother befo' me, in ole Mistis's an' Massa's home, on de plantation in de Souf, de lan' white wid de orange blossom an' sweet wid de scent ob de magnolia tree. An' old Mistis she reared me in de house, f'om de time Ise was eleven yares ole, an' kept me about her own pussen. Den when she ma'ed, Ise holped her to rear all her chilen, an' now dey all dead, but my Miss Annette, dat dese ole a'ms hold when she fust opened her eyes to dis world, an' now she seem to hab ben spirited off. He, de Consol, gib me some money an' put me aboad de ship, an' it sailed away fo' home; an' sich a time as Ise hab a gittin' hea. Ise hab walk an' walk, fo' miles, until my feet beald, an' big lumps come on dem; oh, Massa, Massa, dis ole womæn hab ben sorely done by. Ise always ben ca'ed fo', Ise always hab a plenty, an' now Ise so ole, to be pestered in dis way, to be put out like Hagar into de wilderness, an' by de people Ise seved all my life."

The Count rose, took a pace or two, his face was white as death, and his eyes, which seemed to sink back under his brows, burned with fierce and deadly anger. This old, black woman, as she stood before him in her scanty clothing, shivering with cold, who had served him ~~as~~ faithfully as she had her Mistress,

brought to him no regrets, no sweet memories of the long years which he and the beautiful Annette Lefarge had dwelt together; or for one moment softened his heart to pity. On the contrary, the sight of her coming upon him now, when his one thought, one aim in life, was to marry Miss Graham and her money. The thing he thought was so near achievement stirred all the latent evil in him. Evil passions nursed, pampered and fed until they had grown up within him, to become, as it were, full-fledged wild beasts; that only doze and sleep until the opportune moment, when they rise in all their ferocity. He could then and there have struck the old, black woman dead; he could have struck Annette down and walked over her dead body, if she stood in his way, to the gaining of his purpose. (Thus in a moment we become devils or angels.) Aunt Louise, brave as she was, and loving her dying mistress as she did, shivered with fear, under the cruel pitilessness of his gaze.

"Do you know, did the Count de Noailles visit your Mistress at any time between the period I left for this country and her disappearance? Answer me truthfully," he said, threateningly, stepping close to her and grasping her by the shoulder, with a grip of iron.

"I seed no gentleman at de 'partments, Massa, only de one dat fotched me to his home, an' he lib in de 'partment house," she answered, drawing herself from him, as he loosened his grasp upon her.

"What part of the city do you live in?"



"Ise lib nowhar in particular, Massa, Ise libs jes whar Ise gits mose wo'k to do in families. Ise sometimes fines lodgin' wid an' ole white woman, who hab a little room, she poa like mysef, but she mighty good to me. If Ise could jes gits me a little room to mysef, Massa, Ise be mo comfotable, Ise so poa, it 'pears, Ise neber ken gits de money together to rent a little room."

"There, take that," and he threw upon the table a ten dollar bill; "times are not what they used to be with myself. Get a small room and let me know where you keep yourself, and in the meantime keep up a strict watch and outlook for your Mistriss. If you should happen to find her or learn of her whereabouts, come immediately and acquaint me of it. Come in a few weeks, anyway, and let me know where you have located; be here about the same hour you came this afternoon. If I should leave here before you come round again, inquire at the office for my address; if not, wait in the same place you did this evening until my arrival."

Aunt Louise picked up the money she had risked her life for, and with many "Thank ye, Massa," left the room. In a few moments she was out upon the streets; she could not have earned that much money in four or five weeks, and then it would only have come to her in dribs and drabs. Now she would buy coal and dainty things to eat for her poor Miss Annette, her "dea dying young Mistis," whom she nursed in her cradle.

"Oh, Lody, Lody," she cried within herself, as she

made her way through the halls, down the stairs, and out the door of the ladies' entrance to the street, "Ise tried mightily not to lie, an' Ise didn't; it all hopped as Ise tole it, only my Mistis was along. She dying now an' Ise want de money fo' her; de Lod Himself say, 'Be ye wise as sapents an' ha'mless as doves.' Who hab thought Massa Count id be so base an' treacherous to Miss Annette, who he peared to jes waship; human nature so mighty deceitful, an' dey's no pendance to be placed in de men, dey always leab de woman soona or lata, when dey habn't de sanction ob de Lod. Da is no use now ob dem eber knowin' dat dey bofe am right hea in dis town; my Miss Annette mus neba know of Massa Charley ben hea; she a dying, an' she mus die in peace. Oh, if ole Mistis was a liben, an' seed Miss Annette, her chile. Oh, blessed Lod, Ise thank ye she's ben spared this sorrow. An' ole Massa if he libed, he take no foolishness f'om Massa Charley; he rise in his might an' shoot Massa Count down in his tracks; he, Massa Charley, would no lib an hour, mins Ise tell ye. But deys all dead, de Civil wa kill my ole Massa, he loss so much; yes, dey all dead, an' poa Miss Annette she soon go, too, an' de ole, black woman, be lef all 'lone. Blessed Lod, it's Di will an' best so." And the brave old creature took the corner of her apron and wiped the tears that ran down and scorched her cheeks, as she trudged home in the snow and biting cold of the January night.

After the Count closed the door on Aunt Louise he paced up and down the floor for several minutes.



The old woman whom he thought safe in Europe with her mistress, had suddenly crossed miles of sea and land, and risen up before him, a dark, menacing spectre of his past; right on the eve of the realization of his now most cherished and delightful dream. Oh, this past, the cruel, but just past, holding in its right hand the balancing scales, the left with forefinger pointing to the record. If the Count could he would with one sweep of his hand, put his past from him, blot it out forever. As we sow we reap; this is fair and should be so.

But what had become of Annette? Where could she have gone? he asked himself, as a hundred different thoughts concerning her crowded his mind. If she had gone to live with the Count de Noailles she would have taken her old, black servant with her. Could it be that Louise had lied to him, or that Annette was still in Paris, and had rid herself of her maid, and gone to leading the life of a courtesan, a *demi monde*, and did not want her mother's slave to know. Ah,—could it be,—and there passed over the Count's face a strange gleam, as the thought came to him. "Death, by suicide, found drowned in the Seine." Hideous thought it was, but he experienced relief in it; then he brushed it aside. Yes, he must hasten his marriage; he must not let another night pass without urging Effie to have the civil ceremony take place immediately before her reception, which was to come off in a week. He stopped pacing the floor, went and leaned his arm upon the mantle-piece. "Bah," he hissed, "she could do nothing if we were

once married; but if she should appear upon the scene before the ceremony she might make things deucedly uncomfortable for a fellow." He stepped to the middle of the room, took out his watch, looked at it, then removed his overcoat, which he had forgotten to do when he first came in, and laid it on a table that stood in one corner, and began to dress, as he was to escort Miss Graham to the opera that evening, and it was nearly seven o'clock. In half an hour he entered her carriage, which she had ordered to be sent to his hotel, and which awaited him at the ladies' entrance.



## CHAPTER VII.

SHE ROSE UP, HER CHEEKS AFLAME, AND A LIGHT,  
AS COLD AS THE GLEAM OF HER DIAMOMDS,  
FLASHED FROM HER EYES.

THE Weston Villa was one of those houses that a man builds late in life, but never occupies. It stood to the north of Terrace Q——, about four or five squares farther west in the suburbs, yet in its most fashionable quarter. It occupied about half a block of ground on one of the wide Boulevards, which edge the city's great park. The lower story was built of brown stone, rough hewn, and the upper stories of pressed brick, with cornice trimmings of the stone. Its architecture was like most modern houses, a jumble of Queen Anne, Gothic and Doric, with large dormer windows in its half-gable and conical, pointed roofs. The lower story had a wide piazza in front and running along the left side. On the right, a broad carriage drive wound up from the street, to a porte-cochère. The interior was finished in the different natural expensive woods, and the best skill in decorative art had been employed in ornamenting and giving color and hue to its elegant and spacious apartments.

Its furnishing showed no originality, nor expressed

taste in any particular thing; but one saw everywhere the eye glanced, the lavish expenditure of money, and the display of great luxury. The hangings and upholstery of the drawing-rooms were in pale, canary satin, and rose brocade. Old Irish point lace curtains draped the bow and square windows, and the mantle-pieces of white marble were tastefully carved and inlaid with onyx; while rare and costly oriental rugs covered here and there the polished floors. The same extravagant display of satin, brocade, lace and rich stuffs was to be seen on the second floor, bed-rooms and sitting-rooms. The large reception hall, with its broad, winding stairway, of cedar and oak, was the most pleasing feature of the whole house, to the artistic sense, and was a picture of harmony in itself.

Society had played, piped, fiddled and danced away the first month of the new year, and now it hied itself to the Weston Villa, to see and be seen. The Weston Villa was a scene of brilliance, splendor and revelry by night; along the grand Boulevard the flickering lamps of carriages kept coming and going, up and down in front of the house, which faced the park, with its wide avenues, stately forest trees, oaks and sycamores; its natural rivulets and artificial lakes, stretching away in shadowy mystery, until cut by the low line of the horizon. It was the first reception and ball given by Miss Graham, the heiress and mistress of Weston Villa, since her occupancy. Indeed, the first given by her, since her entrée to the beau monde. It was given now as a forerunner of her coming marriage to the Count Henri de Gascon of



France, which was to take place in a few weeks. She stood in the folding doors of the reception hall and the large drawing-rooms, a vision clad in pale rose satin covered with soft, clinging lace, rare and costly. Some said the overdress had been purchased in Paris at the private sale of the wardrobe of a royal Duchess of the house of Bourbon; others said that the Empress Eugenie had worn it at a grand fête given at the Tuileries, in honor of some Hindoo prince, and sold after the retirement of the lovely Empress, to a rich American lady; she afterwards disposing of it to a New York mercantile house. Be that as it may, to-night it swathed the serpentine figure of Effie Graham, and enhanced her sensuous beauty; making it more alluring to the masculine eye. Her bare neck and bosom pulsed under their weight of gems that, with every rise and fall, gleamed and scintillated with all the reflected iridescent hues of the rooms, and flashed them back again, in their blue, white flame. Diamonds clasped her wrists, and just above the elbow, where the long, soft glove ended, a serpent of glistening stones bound her arms. Her dark, chestnut-brown hair was coiled high on top of her head, with its rings touching the opal-veined temples. In her hand she carried a fan, a work of art, in its combination of mother-of-pearl, jewels and point lace.

By her side, or rather more to her back, stood the woman she called Aunt, the life long companion of her legitimate relative.

In age she was nearing the borderland of the sixties; below medium height, dark visaged, and

of thin angular form. A red ring circled the iris of her small piercing black eyes, giving them an appearance of being habitually inflamed. Her features were large, her complexion swarthy, the mouth vivacious, but the chin strong. Her iron-grey hair softened to some extent a face, not in any sense prepossessing; it might be termed plebeian, but not common-place, as it was a very uncommon face. It might be also termed homely, shrewd, worldly wise, worldly worn, and hard. It had seen many phases of life, particularly its shady phase; never since a child, had her head sought its pillow, until far past midnight, and even now at her age, the habit of late hours was strong with her.

She wore a robe of black velvet and satin, with rare point lace, and diamonds almost as big as filberts flashed and sparkled in her ears, and the rings worn over her white kid gloves, reached to the middle joint of her fingers. The rouge on her withered cheek, added greater brilliance to her little, sharp, black eyes.

There was no particular love between Madge Noris and her ward, for a long while Mrs. Noris smarted under the way her life long friend distributed her money at her death. She felt sore and bitter at heart for months and months, and could not reconcile herself to the small monthly allowance bequeathed her in the will. While she took no part in her friend's enterprises, she helped her in every way with her schemes to reach the desired results. The dead woman was always generous with her during her life,



and she led her to believe that if she went first she would share her fortune equally with her niece. However, Mrs. Noris made the best of what she could not help; she put her allowance as she drew it into the bank in her own name, and let her ward pay all the bills, but for her clothing.

Effie owed much to the worldly-wise and shrewd Madge Noris in reaching her present place in society. When old Madge found that her friend's stocks, bonds, and real estate had doubled and trebled in value, and that Miss Graham was a very wealthy girl, she said to herself: "Why shouldn't the child rise to a place in the world, above her present; money covers a multitude of sins. Why shouldn't the past bury the past, and the dirty methods by which this money was first made." She knew the girl possessed no more than the average intelligence, but she had every requisite to make a success in the social world. She had an insatiable ambition in that direction; she was keen, shrewd, and as cold-blooded as a frog. With these qualities she had youth, great personal beauty, of a certain kind, and above all money to back the whole business. So old Madge had the cunning, what we Americans call cuteness, but more often it is cunning, real genuine cunning. Yes, Madge had the cuteness to know that the society, which she and her life long companion, Effie's aunt kept and lived in, what we in our land call the questionable sort, those who live on the out-skirts of respectability; and in France termed the *demi-monde*, was but a step to the

beau monde, their methods are the same, with this difference, the half-world, throws aside the cloak, the upper world wraps about its indiscretions and hides in its ample folds. So Madge Noris and her ward entered a compact of copartnership, not in words, but a mental understanding; Mrs. Noris was to take entire charge of her house, be her companion, her chaperon, her aunt.

Effie Graham stood in all her superb, sensuous beauty, with a back-ground of flowers, blooming plants, and rare exotics. The long vista of the rooms, with their gleaming lights, the shimmer and sheen of satin, of lace, rich colors, blending to harmonious hues; the waft of perfumed fans, and the rhythm of dainty feet, keeping time to the sweet strains of the waltz. What a triumph is hers, as she stands there with the slow fire of exultation burning in her limpid eyes, while society bows, fawns, and flatters. This girl, the supposed niece of a disreputable woman, yet more likely her daughter. The girl scarcely seventeen that Nelson Lawrie made a sketch of in a down-town garden the night before he left for Europe, whom he saw with an old roué old enough to be her grandfather, bending over her, and pouring in her ears words of flattery and assimilated passion as old and hackneyed as himself. The quasi art student whom Arthur Lowell invited to his house, introduced to his home and wife four years before. The destroyer of Gartha Lowell's peace, the woman who brought sorrow to her young life, who drove



her from home and husband into the streets at night. You were but a girl, then, Effie Graham, you are still but a girl, yet so old in deceit, craft and intrigue.

Does society ask by what right you stand there? What your claims are to its respect and homage? You have neither birth, family, talent, wit, intellect, nor virtue. But society makes its own gods, it likes to be well fed, well housed, and amused; besides you have the golden calf in the Weston Villa. Agreeing with old Madge Noris, society is so cute, it winks, gossips, scoffs, and shrugs its shoulders, and with a laugh at earnestness, cries, "Dear me, I have no time to be hunting up or looking into people's pedigree. I make certain demands upon my votaries, they must have what I require, and one and the most essential thing, is the golden calf. Besides new people are decidedly interesting, and I like to be interested."

Let us make a mental search among the gay throng for some of our society friends. A little to the left of the folding-doors stands Count Henri de Gascon. To-night he is quite the vogue, he is every inch a man of the world, in appearance so distingue, that our society which is so fluctuating in our large cities and changes almost with the seasons, think him a real French Count, with an estate in Brittany, and a large bank roll in the Bank of France. Our young bells pooh, poohed at the idea that he was born in America, which was the story afloat. He speaks English, they said, with such a decided French accent, besides he's so divinely handsome, such elegant manners, and the courtesy of a prince. He is paying his

devoirs to Mrs. Barton Hamstead, who is there in all her millinery, and as she always does, makes a decidedly striking appearance. She dearly loves Counts, Lords, and Earls, titled people being her weakness. No woman is to be blamed for admiring an accomplished gentleman, women are like children, they take to those who are kindly disposed to them, and the sure road to their favor is for a man to be courteous. Disraeli, the brilliant English statesman, was once asked how he came to be such a favorite with Queen Victoria, he answered he did not know, unless it was that he never contradicted. This same Disraeli was generous enough to own that he owed all his success in life to women. We do know that his wife was the power behind the throne. And thousands of other great men and thousands more lesser lights have reached their places in the world of letters, science, religion, art, and statesmanship by women who stood in the background aiding and abetting them and making it possible for them to arrive at the desired goal; taking no account of themselves. These, of course, are the exceptional women, their husbands were the exceptional men. But we fear it was not the man, or the gentleman, that Mrs. Barton Hamstead had in view, while she made herself so gracious to the Count Henri de Gascon. His title, we are sorry to say, played quite a part in the low intoning of her voice, and the smiles she bestowed upon him.

Mr. Barton Hamstead looked very broad and very stout in evening dress, his face was not so much like



the full moon, as it resembled the sun showing red through the murky haze of a gray sky. He didn't like receptions and balls, when a ball or reception was mentioned he puffed and blew a great deal and pulled at the corners of his mustache with his fat gloved hand, and kept it up all evening, after he had reluctantly dragged himself to the house where it was given. This worried Mrs. Barton exceedingly, she understood what all Barton's restlessness meant; it meant that he hated to be carried away from his elegant warm library, and the enjoyment of his evening paper, in comfortable loose round coat and slippers. Then after the paper was read, a game of poker or old fashioned cribbage, with a few friends who happened to drop in—and they generally happened in—to have a talk over the rise and fall of stocks and bonds, or the latest political issue. The snug little supper that followed, where the best foreign wines, the finest champagne, whiskies and French eau de vie were drunk, and the evening wound up with the best Havana cigars. He detested standing round in evening dress, bowing and scraping to women, let the young men do that. Of course, there were plenty of good things to eat, but a deucedly uncomfortable way of getting at them. You dear old Barton Hamstead, you are not so free, if you are worth millions.

Mrs. Calwald stands near a window to the right of Mrs. Barton Hamstead, she is all light green satin, like the green of sea waves, covered with Irish point lace. Her ample bosom, like hills of snow, rising above a very low cut corsage, were somewhat sub-

duced by a covering of the lace; but her arms were bare to the narrow strap, which crossed over her shoulders. A necklace of diamonds clasped her throat, and in her gloved hand she carried a fan of white ostrich feathers. Mrs. Calwald had a penchant for articles of dress of the large and floating kind.

“What do you think of this turn out, Al?” She said, with a little sniff, and a smile playing about her lips, as if she was making a mental note of everything she saw. She seated herself beside her husband, who had taken advantage of a low divan which stood in a recess of one of the windows, glad to find a resting place out of the way of the crowd. “I just guessed there would be a terrible jam, I suppose curiosity brought most of them, to see the house and its new things.”

“And to show their good clothes, now don’t deny it, Ann. What woman having a new gown doesn’t want all her sisters to see it,” said Mr. Calwald, with a snap of his small, sharp eyes, and rumpling up his face with a smile at Ann, as he took in her ample person, in her flowing green satin and point lace, thinking of the dollars it cost and the check for a handsome sum, he would have to pay her modiste.

“Of course, Mrs. Barton Hamstead wouldn’t let a swell affair like this pass her, she likes to see and be seen too well for that,” she went on, waving her white ostrich fan to and fro. “The Greysons—h-mm—they’re not here—h-mm—they’re poor, but pride themselves on blood and good family. Mrs. General Campden is absent, also—h-mm—had a cold, I sup-



pose; how funny," Mrs. Calwald's double chin folded and creased, as her lips parted in a smile. "Exclusive, my eyes, yes—umph, still exclusiveness don't count much in these days; she'll be brought around after awhile. If Miss Graham marries the Count, money and title will open the locks to the inner circle and sweep away all barriers to its choice places. But supposing the other woman appears on the scene the day of the wedding, as they do in novels. My, wouldn't it be a dinner for the young men, who envy the Count's prize, and a tea-party for all the mothers and old dowagers, and young women, who hate Miss Graham. It would be the choice dish for a whole year, a *pâté de foies gras*, in richness, we would then get the details of the story and judge for ourselves. Ha, h-mm—funny, isn't it?" and Mrs. Calwald's face settled to its usual stolid expression.

"Well, my dear, whether the Count is a real Count or not, I can't say, but I hardly think he is a man, who would place himself in a position on the eve of marrying a young lady like Miss Graham, without being free to do so," Mr. Calwald coughed, ran his forefinger and thumb around the edge of his black satin vest, gave it a pat or two, and adjusted it smoothly to his figure.

"Oh, like Barkis, the courts, are willin' enough to grant divorces for the least provocation, but what has that to do with the wrath of a woman wronged! Pooh—when there's a divorce that settles it; but in this case report saith there was no ceremony, therefore no divorce; hence no settlement."

"Well, well, my dear, you know more about these little matters than I, but let us hope for the sake of morals, society, and all concerned, that no harm will come to the young girl."

"You dear good old stupid Al, you have no eyes, or ears, for anything outside of your office and ledgers," said Mrs. Calwald, brushing the edge of Almond's nose, with the tip of one of the long ostrich feathers of her fan, which caused him to pucker up his lips into a little round knot that was meant for a smile. "Just look, Al, at Freddie Faboul," she went on, glancing to the left of her, where Freddie Faboul in high glee, was cavorting about in the quadrille with Annie McClure, his partner. "Annie McClure is the brainiest girl in our set. If the surgeons could do a little trepanning there, and transpose some of Annie's brain into Freddie's cranium, he might make better use of his time than dawdling around the girls from morning until night, and studying up fancy costumes. Wonder where he ran across that outfit, how swell! Light gray corduroy pants, satin vest, and black velveteen dress-coat, its broad lapels lined with gray satin, white flowing tie; and delicate cream kids. His boutonniere a large creamy chrysanthemum. Ah, here comes young Herondon, what a relief, he is such a fine looking and manly fellow."

The music begins in the slow step of the minuet, from that to the quick time of the lancers. Effie Graham dances well. She looked like some beautiful Naiad, floating through the figures, as if her feet barely touched the floor. She gives the tips of her



fingers to Freddie Faboul, and as she passes him in the dance, she lifts her limpid eyes with their molten fire to his, the smile which barely parted the red lips, showing their rows of pearls, and the scent of the roses on her bosom, lingered long with him. He was just about her own age, a little weak and frivolous, it is true, but he had travelled considerably since he left college, and mixed much with young men of his own age, and older men, of his own place in life; besides he had a good mother who taught him the value of keeping clean handed. Yet as he looked upon Effie with her dangerous beauty, he blushed to the roots of his hair, and pulled the corners of his light moustache. He saw not her cold pitiless heart, men seldom look farther than what pleases their senses, it is always the woman's body they love, never mind character and soul.

Four hours later Effie Graham entered her boudoir; the same luxury, the same rich and costly hangings, as in the grand drawing-rooms were to be seen here. She stood before a mirror which reached from the floor to the ceiling. A proud smile played about the red pouting mouth, the fire of exultation that burned in her heart, sent its hot glow to her cheek, and shot flame from under the drooping eyelids that scorched the long dark lashes.

Triumph crowned her brow, her every wish, every desire was hers, and now the one aim of her life, since the day she knew the contents of her aunt's will and that she was rich in her own right had been attained. This night the world was at her feet, her world, the

world she longed to conquer. She had taken no step, put forth no energy, not a finger had she moved, to reach her throne. The beau-monde, the world we call society, the ignis-fatuus that so many women pursue, but to elude them and weary, worn, they die upon the roadside, half way to the beloved and longed for goal. It had come to her unasked, unsought, throwing its treasures in her lap and falling at her feet, worshipped. This woman of low origin, no moral, no ability, no talent, without one generous principle; nothing but a certain kind of sensuous beauty; a cold, calculating shrewdness; and sense enough to understand the value of silence, to hide her ignorance. True she possessed the one essential, the golden key, which unlocks all earthly doors, and in her closet stood the world's god, the golden calf. She turned from the mirror, and petulantly threw her fan upon the floor, and her lace handkerchief after it, wearily (for even she wearied at times of adulation) dropped into a low satin couch, unfastened the mass of hothouse blush roses from her corsage, and began to pluck their leaves apart, and let them fall at her feet. There was the same wanton cruel expression on her face, as on that morning long ago when she sat in the dining-room of Gartha Lowell's lovely cottage, an expression which made Gartha shudder, as she came from her room, where she had found refuge from this girl's and her husband's cold sneers, and passed her on her way to the kitchen. To-night it was more exemplified in what we may term the satiety of lavishness, avarice, covetousness. Something like what



the Lord meant when He said: "Woe unto those that are full, for they shall be made to hunger."

The Count then entered, as he did she playfully threw a rose in his face, he caught it, held it up, and pressed it to his cheek, and bowed. Then he came toward her, knelt down on one knee at her feet, and raised her white jeweled hand to his lips. "Oh, my love, my love, my fair one, my beautiful queen, my wife," he took her in his arms, and crushed her to his breast, and kissed her red pouting mouth, "Oh, my darling, my love, you must be mine, why put off our marriage, it is cruel this waiting. Why not to-morrow as well as three weeks or a month from now? I can not live longer without you; I fear every moment some cruel fate will part us. Let us go in the morning to the justice of some of the civil courts, or some obscure minister and be married privately, we then can have the public wedding, when most convenient." He kissed her again and again, and with his arms folded about her, her head pillowed on his shoulder, he used all the eloquence, all the persuasive arts, he was master of in the way of love making (and they were many), to have her promise to be his wife in the morning. Yes, he must have her; this prize must be his; before another sun would set he would move earth and heaven, if he could, to accomplish it. Then come what would, he was safe.

"Bah, why should I fear she loves me. If the other should turn up after the ceremony she could do her worst; she has no legal claim upon me. But, but—"

great dread seized him, the cold chills crept up

about his heart, and he trembled visibly. Yes, Count Henri de Gascon, has the woman you deserted in Paris no moral claim on you? You were not bound by any legal ties to Annette Lefarge, but by an oath sworn to her over the crib of her sleeping infant, that you would love and cherish her, until death parted you. And since that night, have you not been bound by a chain whose links were forged week by week, month by month, year by year, which no court can unfasten. You took the law in your own hands, you disregarded its mandates, to you it was love without law, now you must pay the penalty that the moral law exacts of all things illicit.

Effie Graham always mistress of herself, her loves and passions, had played with men, as she did with her pet poodle, or pet cat; many of her lovers hated the poodle and pet cat, and would have given their heads for one caress of her soft white hand. As she lay crushed in her lover's arms she was for once conquered; the blood flowed from her heart through her veins and went seething to her brain; for a moment she would have promised the man who was to be her husband anything he asked; she would have given him half her fortune. But the next moment she was Effie Graham; cool, calculating, selfish, with desires insatiable. She tore herself from his embrace, rose up and stood with cheeks aflame, a light as cold as the gleam from her diamonds flashed from her eyes. "I must see my attorney, the arrangements for our marriage have not yet been completed," she said, taking a step or two back from him. "I will send for him the first thing in the morning."



He looked at her standing there in her rose hued splendor; laces, rare and costly, swathing the serpentine curves of her limbs; her eyes burning, her cheek crimsoned, a smile playing upon her red mouth, while her white bosom heaved under its weight of gems that scintillated like moonlight glistening on sea foam. She stood a very Cleopatra in the midst of luxury, rich oriental hangings, colors, and delicate perfumes. As he gazed upon her, she almost drove him to frenzy, for the face of the old black woman darkened the space between him and her. Was he going to let all this wealth and this beautiful young woman slip from his grasp? Never, and he almost laughed aloud, at the thought. He who had played for thousands with men, who bore the name of gentlemen—some wearing the grandest titles in Europe—and won. He, the petted boy of fortune, son of a millionaire, whose white hands never did an honest day's work in all his useless life. The prodigal who spent and rioted away his inheritance and now lived on his wits. This woman and her money was the biggest stake he had ever thrown for, was he, the successful gambler, going to lose now? No, never, never. He rose, took a step or two towards her; she turned from him, "I will see you in the morning at ten o'clock; good night, dear," she said, tipping the handle of a small silver bell. "You will find Johnson in the hall, waiting to attend upon you." As the Count passed down the stairs, her maid and Aunt Madge Noris entered her boudoir

## CHAPTER VIII.

SUCH ARE MY BRETHREN, MY SISTERS AND MY  
MOTHER (LUKE, VIII CHAP.).

THE night that Gartha Rowland Lowell was driven from her husband and home, and the last we see of her, was standing on the hill, with eyes gazing down upon the city; she wandered about for hours, not knowing where she was going, until about the break of day she found herself at Tanglewood sitting on the steps of the Lawrie cottage. It was thus Mrs. Lawrie found her with Blucher, the big St. Bernard, Peter Lawrie's companion for twelve years, lying at her feet. When Gartha opened the small wicker gate the younger dogs began to bark and make a great ado, but Blucher knew by one sniff who it was, Gartha, in a semi-unconscious way, put out her hand to him, he licked it, followed on after her, and when she seated herself on the porch steps, laid down at her feet. His dog instinct knew there was something wrong and he offered her the protection man refused her. Mrs. Lawrie, awakened by the dogs barking, and that prescience which some have to a great degree, caused her to leave her bed, open the blinds of her window, and look out; when she saw it was a woman, although she could not distinguish the features, or dress, as the



dawn had scarcely dispersed the shadows of night ; she knew it was Gartha. She slipped on a wrapper, went out and led her into the house, led her on up the stairs to her own room, the one she occupied before her marriage and got her into bed. For two days she remained in bed, and for a whole month she never left her room, Mrs. Lawrie sending up her meals. After she had been in the house about a week she had related to Mrs. Lawrie the whole story of her unhappy married life and the final cause of her leaving her husband and her home, and that she would like to be quiet and see no one, but she, Mrs. Lawrie, that she could best fight the battle of her grief alone and with God's help. At the end of six weeks she began to go down stairs to her meals, she would sit an hour or two with Mrs. Lawrie and Peter, also awhile with Carl in the studio. Carl showed her great sympathy, mixed with delicacy and tact ; taking it as the most natural thing in the world for her to be home among them. And had she been Mary, when a little girl, Peter Lawrie couldn't have been kinder, gentler, and who could be more welcome to Tanglewood, "than our own Gartha."

After six or seven months when Mrs. Lawrie and Peter thought that Gartha was going to make Tanglewood her home, and she would be the comfort and stay of their declining years, for they loved her, and Nelson at that time was still abroad ; the lease of Gartha's own cottage, "The Maples," had expired. The gentleman who had lived in it for several years wished to renew the lease, it was such a lovely spot

and so finely situated, hilly, and studded with grand old sycamores, beeches, and the forest oak, besides a view of the river. But Gartha declined all offers, she had formed other plans for its use. The gentleman then bought one of the lots from Gartha; she had sold several of the seven acres left her, with the cottage and its grounds, and which had been divided into lots, as the ground about her place had so increased in value that she received goodly sums for what she had sold. With some of this money she made many repairs on her own house, both inside and outside. She added a wing of two rooms, a library and dining-room and two rooms above. She furnished the library and dining-room, after her own taste, plainly but artistically. The rooms above she took for her own use, she had saved many of her mother's old fashioned but rare pieces of furniture, such as a fine rose-wood bookcase, which stood in Nelson's studio, and which little Topping just raved over the first time she beheld it, for it put all her tawdry new would-be-old things to shame. And there was the large old English oak sideboard, and chairs to match, stowed away in the attic of the Lawrie cottage, and other pieces that were too large for the small rooms of the modern cottage. Mrs. Lawrie and Peter used every persuasion to keep her with them, so did Carl. She comforted Mrs. Lawrie by telling her that she was not going far and that she would see her daily; that she had for a long while intended to adopt two children, a boy and a girl, that were left her. And that Anne, now a middle-aged



woman, who had lived with her mother, when she was a small girl, was coming to take charge of her house.

We will now take the reader to The Maples, Mrs. Lowell's cottage, and into her sitting-room above the library in the wing. The room is large and square, its squareness broken by a large bay window, which faces the southeast, giving a glimpse through the forest trees of a bend in the river looking like a silver thread cutting the dark line of the opposite shore. Another pleasant feature about this large bow window was that at morning it presented a vast sweep of the sky, lighted up by the early rising sun, and at evening they reflected the glory of the sunset. It was a lovely room, plainly furnished, but so cheerful, and about it a sort of atmosphere that warmed the heart and made it restful, and gave it a sense of that sweet peace, which is to be prized above all else in the world. The floor was covered with pretty matting, having a few bright rugs laid here and there. In the center stood a large round table filled with books, papers, magazines, children's schoolbooks, and picture books. On one side of the carved mantel-piece of cherry stood a high oak book-case with shelves filled with books, and draped with curtains of light flowered stuff hanging from poles. On the other side stood an organ, a guitar, and a small violin. Between the two large front windows draped in white muslin curtains was a massive walnut dressing-case, also belonging to her mother, and having a high broad mirror. In the opposite space between the bay win-

dow and the door, which led into the hall, stood a black hair-cloth sofa, this made a sort of recess of the deep windows, which it partially screened, and was taken advantage of by turning it into a sort of play house. Here was a doll's wicker cradle, boxes filled with paper dolls, and one containing a tiny silver thimble, a needle book, spools of thread, a small pin cushion, and all like paraphernalia. Besides there were carts, horses, steam-engines, blocks, whips, balls, Noah's arks, and soldiers on drill.

The most attractive feature of the room was the walls which were hung with etchings, and old engravings of a religious character: One of the Madonna and child, one of the Holy Family after Leonardo da Vinci, engraved by Raphael Morgan; Jesus, when a boy twelve years of age, disputing in the Temple with the learned doctors of the law; The Saviour's agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and a few small landscapes in oil, by Nelson Lawrie, rare bits of color. Leading off this room was a smaller room, the sanctum sanctorum of the mistress of the cottage, and what she claimed as her own little family bedroom. The floor was covered with matting as in the sitting-room, and in one corner stood a white iron bedstead draped in white muslin; at its foot was a crib big enough for a child from two years up to seven or eight. A single white iron bedstead stood near a large window which looked west, and the only one in the room near this window was a table covered with white muslin, and upon it leaning against the wall was a plain dark flat wooden crucifix; and at its



foot laid a Bible. This window and table Gartha called her shrine. Here she came at the sunset hour, locked herself in and took her place by the window, and sat with folded hands; it was her hour for thought, reflection, and prayer, and thanksgiving to Him, who had taken her life, and was making it so fruitful. It was the hour, when the shadows lengthen in the valley, and the sun droops low in the horizon and goldens the mist upon the hills. The soul's hour of rest, the sweet waning hour of day, when the earth and the heavens are filled with color, perfume, and the silent glory of God.

Let us enter the sitting-room; the hour is eight of a cold winter's evening, Gartha is seated in a rocking chair by the table, on which burns a student lamp, she is clad in a house robe of soft gray wool, brightened here and there by bows of crimson ribbon; the creamy lace about the neck and wrists, giving it a tasteful simplicity. Her lovely hair is rolled in coils high on top of her head, the gray of her dress, giving added lustre to its rich brown hues.

On the floor at her feet sat a girl of about seven years, a small old fashioned quaint little maid. She had a wealth of golden hair falling about her shoulders, and her serious Madonna-like face was a study for a painter. She was holding in her arms in a very loving manner her doll Sadie, whose wicker cradle, we have already observed in the corner; while she prattled in an earnest way to Gartha about something which had occurred to herself and Charley during her absence. Gartha who had returned home

from some business which took her to the city, but half an hour before was all attention, as she stroked with her right hand the dark head of a slim, straight boy of about five or six years old. He stood leaning at her side, his dark grey eyes smiling down upon Talitha whom he knew as a sister and playmate, ever since he knew anything; at least since he was brought to the Institute a baby six months old. Talitha was then the baby of the house, she had been left to Gartha by her mother who died at the Institute. She was a young country girl, an orphan who had married a worthless young fellow against her aunt's will; he brought her to the city, where after a long hunt for work and not finding any, he deserted his young wife and baby. The mother struggled on for months trying to support herself and infant. When Gartha found her she was living in an old shed in an alley, cold, hungry, and utterly destitute. Gartha was at that time but a girl herself, and the condition of this young mother touched her sympathies greatly; she had the mother and her child brought to the Home. She was then in a decline and a settled melancholy had taken hold of her mind. In six months she died, leaving Gartha sole guardian and mother to her little two-year-old girl, who bore the curious Greek word Talitha for a name, meaning damsel. The word our Lord used when he called to the daughter of Jarius to rise from the dead.

Talitha was delighted with her new brother, the baby, and shared with him the affection and petting of her beautiful mother, whom God had sent her, and



the family of the Institute, which consisted of the matron, a lovely, gentle, elderly, Christian woman. Two young teachers and three other women who acted in different capacities, besides twenty-five children from two years up to twelve, thirteen, and fourteen.

And now we come to the baby boy, around whom he and his mother all our story hinges. What shall we say of Charley, whom Talitha loved and took the responsibility of both sister and mother in her own old fashioned quaint little maid way. Charley loved her dearly in return but in his own boyish fashion. He ruled her with true masculine despotism, yet with a trait peculiar to his sex, he was never happy when Tilta, as he called her, was not in sight. He would stop his play any moment, no matter how interested, when he missed her, to go in search of her. It made no difference how many of the other children were with him, the moment she was not to be seen, away with him his slender limbs flew to where she was, even if she had left him but a second before.

He was in many ways a marked child with hair of a silken black, which fell in straight locks upon a broad blue veined forehead; the brows like a faint dark pencil stroke curving slightly from the line of the nose. The eyes were a dark bluish grey, veiled by long black lashes, a contrast to his pale swarthy skin. The features were delicate and beautifully cut, while over the whole face, lingered a shade of sadness, which was dispelled now and then, by a smile of rare sweetness, and while at play a ringing child-

ish laugh. A few days after Gartha's first meeting with Potipher Gilphin, little Charley sat playing on the floor of the sitting room with his blocks. Gartha called to him to come and have his blouse changed for a clean one; he was so absorbed in building his castle that she had to call him again, this time hearing his name, spoken louder than usual and in a more decisive tone than his mamma. Gartha was in the habit of speaking to him, he dropped the block he was lifting from the floor, turned quickly around and looked up into her face and smiled. Gartha was so struck with the resemblance of the boy to the man she had met a few nights before, as he sat relating to her his story, the expression of his face, which conveyed to her more than the words he spoke, the suffering he had lived through. In that one glance the one flash of the boy's eyes, she read again, his mother's sin. She let the waist she held in her hand drop at her feet on the floor. Was this likeness to Potipher Gilphin, her imagination, this resemblance to a man, who was in no way connected with the boy, the man who was separated from his mother by miles and miles of sea and land, and years of time before his birth, and who had never laid eyes upon him?

No, she found it was not simply an impression conveyed from the brain to the sight, for as the days and weeks went by, and she had several interviews with Mr. Gilphin, she detected more and more the peculiar likeness of the boy to Mr. Gilphin. Sometimes in the slow droop of the long lashes, which gave a pensiveness to his features, the quick gestures and



nervous grace of the slim agile body, the turning suddenly around when she spoke to him, and crossing his arms, as he stood before her. How came the boy so marked? Was it a memory of other days that stole upon his mother in her quiet moments? Moments when she sat alone in her room, which she often did before his birth; moments when remorse seized her, as the face of the young husband and child she had so shamefully deserted rose up before her and persisted in intruding upon her. Then at other times a longing heart-sickness, a longing home-sickness, as her eyes gazed down the Boulevard over the rows of Paris houses, to the Seine, across the ocean, to her native land, fair America; and her native southern village where all her people lay buried.

She had tasted of all the world had to give, she had drunk to the very dregs its cup of pleasure. Wealth, honor, admiration, her days and nights of dissipation, all fled as the mother in her asserted itself. She was at the age when motherhood if the woman possesses its instincts at all, feels most its responsibilities, its keenest joys, and its bitterest sorrows. With these came the knowledge daily, that the man, the father of her babe, for whom she had sinned, and thrown away all that is safe, and sacred, to woman, was slipping from her. She had no claim in a sense, a legal claim in law, to be called his wife, for the law often holds a thing legally right, when it is morally wrong, and vice versa. So for months before her baby came, her thoughts continually reverted to the husband she had

wronged, and his face rose constantly before her, as the accusing angel of her shame, causing her the most poignant grief. Thus nature is its own avenger.

Gartha, little by little, saw that the boy, was no ordinary child; he was never known to fret or cry, while with her; indeed he was no crying baby, but the reverse. He had the reputation with his nurse the faithful Fanny, an elderly woman of the stout good natured sort, whom Gartha appointed as sole nurse to him, of being an old fashioned serious baby. "Did you ever see anything like him, for being quiet," she would say to herself, as he lay in his wicker carriage, under the big forest trees, while she sat by him, with her mending and darning. "You'd think he was composing a sermon, he's so deep in thought, his eyes lookin' far out to sea, as the sayin' is."

Thus we find him a lovely boy of nearly six years, very fond of play, yet he will stop in the most exciting part of it when he hears Mrs. Lowell's voice calling, or speaking to him. No matter where he would be and she sent Talitha or Fanny for him, his little feet would seemingly take wings and fly to her. While not always obedient to his nurse, he was exactly so to his mamma Garta, as he lovingly called her. In the evening after tea, Gartha would take the boy and girl, to her sitting-room, seat herself by the table where a student lamp burned. Charley would draw up his little rocking chair, and seat himself by her knee, and Talitha would sit on a low hassock at her feet. This was the hour they loved, when they had



their mamma Garta all to themselves. Gartha would read to them a chapter or two from some interesting child's story, then a verse or two from the new Testament, which she would explain, conveying in simple language their meaning, and generally making it plain to their child understanding. After this she would seat herself at the organ, Talitha would pick up her violin, and take her place at Gartha's left, Gartha would then lead in the hymn. Talitha who had a clear sweet soprano voice, looked like one of Correggio's angels in the Nativity, with her flowing golden hair, her blue eyes raised to the ceiling, her face aglow with rapture, as she drew the bow, to and fro, across the string of her violin, and poured out her young voice in sweet flute-like tones in praises to God on high. Little Charley with dark, veiled, dreamful eyes, watching every movement of his sister, and trying to sing with all the force of his young lungs. Gartha with head thrown back, her slim fingers touching softly the keys, resembled one of Correggio's Madonnas. And certainly the group made a picture, which any modern artist, might have rivalled Correggio, in beauty and richness of color, if he painted it from nature. After the hymn was finished Gartha would see to putting Charley to bed, which she did ever since she brought him to her home. Talitha would also retire to her snowy bed, that stood at the foot of Gartha's.

So love brought treasures to Gartha, as the Apostle Paul speaks of his conversion on the road to

Damascus, "I saw Jesus like one born out of due time." The love of these two children was born to her out of due time, and came as a joy to her heart, and a light in her darkest hour. She sought and she found, she knocked, and it was opened unto her. She heard the words of the Saviour when He hung upon the cross to his beloved apostle John, recommending His mother to his care. "Son, behold thy mother, and mother behold thy son." They had been repeated over again in her own case, son, daughter, behold thy mother; mother behold thy children. And likely they are repeated in many lives. And again when Jesus was teaching the multitude, some one came to him and said, "Behold thy mother and thy brethren, awaiteth outside for thee." And He answered them, saying: "Who is my mother or my brethren?" And He looked around and about on them, which sat about Him, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren, for whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." Mark, chap. iii, verses 34-35.

So Gartha's life was full, every moment, every hour of the day was occupied. Her talents, and energy bore a hundred fold and returned again to Him who gave them. And that sensuousness which is a part of every physically healthy young man or woman, and which is expressed to a certain degree, in all poetry, music and art, had been gradually lessening since the night she left her home and husband. Since then she had grown broader, her thoughts far reach-



ing until intellect and spirit reigned, and the spirit ruled intellect, and she was free as the birds that soar up, up, in the blue expanse, and sing as they soar, a joyous song. "Free as the winds, which cometh and goeth, and no man knoweth where they listeth." So was the spirit in her.

## CHAPTER IX.

THIS WAS THE MAN SHE HAD PROPHESED OF.

GARTHA had just seated herself by the table to read for an hour or two, which was her habit before retiring, when Fanny knocked at the sitting-room door, and said, that Dr. Alvin was downstairs in the library, and wished to see her. After their greeting, "I was in hopes," said Cyrus, "to arrive in time to have a few words with the children before their bed time."

"It's but a few minutes since they retired, but both are fast asleep," she answered, as she beckoned him to be seated, and drawing an arm chair up to the centre table, where a bronze lamp of rare workmanship burned. As she seated herself, she saw by the light of the lamp which fell upon his face, that he was looking pale, and the marks of fatigue were plainly dented under his eyes. He had spent the morning, until about one o'clock in his study, then ate a light lunch, and had been since then visiting the sick and poor, praying at the bed-side of the dying; speaking for half an hour to a society of benevolent ladies, that met at four o'clock in the parlors of the church, and winding up with one of his eloquent prayers. And now he had come from the city before going home to dinner to see Mrs. Lowell on an errand of charity.



“Yes,” he replied, thoughtfully, “it is the glorious privilege of childhood to have no care nor responsibility. I think the Master meant us to enjoy something of this privilege when He said, ‘Unless ye receive the kingdom of heaven as little children, ye in nowise will enter therein.’ If we had the simplicity, and faith, of children, we would throw all our cares and responsibilities upon Him. And He would set up His kingdom in our hearts, and we would enjoy part of our spiritual heaven here. I do not mean by that, that we should cease to work, or shirk our duties but put our hand to the plow and never look back. To work in His vineyard, which means all the world’s work, is part of the heaven, He came to establish on earth. Jesus Himself, with all His Godly power, was simple and child-like, so was Paul with all his learning and genius, so were all the apostles, and we observe it in every truly great man.” He raised his small, thin, nervous hand and brushed the hair off his brow.

Gartha’s heart gave a great bound, as she turned her glance upon him. The small poetical head, was slightly bent, presenting from where she was seated the profile, which suggested in all the lines and curves of his clear cut features, strength and character. The drooping mustache, concealing a mouth, a woman might have kissed as she would that of a baby’s, so free was it from all sensuality, carnality, and which gave grace to the chin. The bright grey eyes, their flash quick as an eagle’s, and burning with the fire

of the enthusiast. Ah, she thought how spirit gropes in the dark cavern of matter, and the senses; how it fights for ascendancy, and cries, "I am life, the life that never dies, the life eternal." Then after blunders and mistakes, sorrow, and the drinking of the bitter cup, the heart and mind is made to understand. "Yes, yes," she said, to herself, "I knew sometime in the future, somewhere in the beyond, intellect would meet intellect, and spirit would speak to spirit."

She loved Nelson Lawrie, as a sister a dear brother, at an age when music, poetry, art, and all that was ideal, was her dream. She loved her husband, oh, how well—how fondly, none could ever know, but her own heart and God. Thus man flings aside the rare and precious love of a chaste woman, and presses to his breast the tainted and besmirched. But the love Cyrus Alvin inspired her with, was different from all the others. His intellect, spirituality, his tenderness, his religious fervor, their similarity of tastes and purposes, blended and harmonized until their love could be likened to nothing but the love of the angels. Not long after they first met she told him the story of her unhappy marriage. He had divined before he heard her history, that she had been down in the depths, had waded through the muddy waters; had spent her night in Gethsemane, but had come out bravely. God called her, and she answered to the call, and was chosen. They met often in their work, and had had many talks together; he helped and encouraged her, and she drank in strength and power from his teach-



ing. He opened up new vistas of light, and led her to heights, which gave her glimpses to new and subtle meaning of Christ's teachings.

"Yes, yes, it is a great boon, a great gift to possess simple child-like faith," she answered, reflectively.

"If men and women, would but seek for spiritual knowledge, would but listen to those who would teach them; there would be no more fretting, worrying, fault-finding, carping and bitterness. Oh, no, the wrinkles would smooth out, and the bitterness and sordidness, disappear, the character would become lovable, the face serene and happy and shine with a beauty good to look upon. Then we would have some of God's heaven here, God's eternity upon earth."

"Yes, but these blessings come to but few, here and there to the individual," she replied.

"It is comparatively few who seek them; the great majority of mankind seem always to have downward tendencies. I do not mean our civilization, which must grow upward and on, wherever Christianity in its true sense is taught and preached. But man in an unregenerate state is downward."

"Unfortunately the human race has been taught wrong, Christ's teachings have not been given to it, in its broad and simple purity. In regard to the senses and animal passions, the teachings of men have heretofore tended to gratify them, rather than subdue them. The Mission of our Lord was to annihilate them, and give us life; it is the passions that destroy. But here I have forgotten hospitality, knowing that you have been out since noon, and have come all the

way here without dinner, and the weather so cold," she said, rising and leaving him. She passed through the lovely cozy dining-room to the kitchen where she found Anne. His eyes followed her with admiration and a holy, tender love, such as the Saviour might have given Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

"I would like you, Anne, to prepare a nice lunch for Dr. Alvin," she said. Opening the door of a large closet, she took down a small gas stove, and the loveliest little copper tea-kettle, that would hold water enough for about three cups of tea. Then from the same shelf, the dearest cunningest tea-pot, of earthenware, filled the tea-kettle with water, and carried the whole thing into the dining-room and set it on a side table kept for that purpose, attached her rubber to one of the gas brackets, lit her gas, and set her tea-kettle on to boil. Then Anne brought in a waiter filled with good things, laid the cloth, and the daintiest of china dishes, and went into the library to invite Cyrus out to have a cup of tea. And by the time Cyrus reached the dining-room, Gartha had the tea ready, and such a cup of tea, was never Cyrus Alvin's privilege to drink before. Gartha seated herself at the table, poured herself a cup of tea to keep company with Cyrus who ate heartily, and enjoyed every morsel of the lunch set before him. For the Rev. Cyrus, had a good appetite, and a relish for clean, plain, delicately cooked food. He was a very healthy minded, human man.

"What I have come to see you about, and wish you



to help me in," he said, as he sipped his tea, "and it seems strange that I have never thought to acquaint you of it before, as the story is one of those that I know will most deeply interest you. About two years and a half before on just such a cold night as this, I was preaching at the Mission; after the services was over, and most of the people had left for home, there came to me a woman, she was weeping, and greatly agitated. As she became more composed I got a glimpse of her face, behind the handkerchief she held to her eyes, to hide her tears, that fell like rain down her cheeks. I was struck and amazed at the traces of unusual and rare beauty, which must have been hers, before ill health, want, privation and suffering came to mar it. I had never seen a face like hers, a whole life's tragedy was written in it, and when she removed her handkerchief for a moment, and looked up and her eyes met mine, I felt as if they had pulled the heart out of my breast; for they seemed to plead, and beg so hard for pity, rest and peace. I could see Mary Magdalene in all her wrecked, but superb, and queenly beauty, standing before our Lord Jesus, begging and pleading for pardon. She was tall and erect, and for all her apparel bore the marks of wear, most distingué in appearance. In all the years of my ministry I have never known such complete conversion. She told me afterwards that for months she had contemplated murder, that she had that very day, walked the streets of the city, from early morning, in search of her prey. I comforted her as best I could,

and walked home with her to her little room in the top story of a small tenement house in an alley, one of the poorest and most crowded neighborhoods of the city. She had been living there nearly eight or nine months, with an old colored servant, a former slave of her mother's, and her own nurse from infancy, the old woman supported herself and her mistress by washing and whatever work she could get to do by the day."

At the mention of the old negro woman, Gartha who sat listening with deep interest to the minister's narrative, turned deathly pale, as the thought quick as a flash, went back to the night, the colored nurse brought Charley, a baby six months old, to the Institute, and after five years, returned again for him. But she said nothing and the Rev. Cyrus continued:

"I had a long talk with her that night, she told me most of her history. She came from an old family of planters, and some of the best blood of the south ran in her veins. Her great sin was that she left a kind young husband and child, and fled to Europe with the son of a wealthy man, a merchant prince, and lived for years abroad with him as his wife. They lived in great luxury, and she must have reigned as queen in the fast set in which she moved. When he had spent the fortune his father gave him, he deserted her, leaving her without a penny. Little by little, she disposed of all her jewels and rich apparel to keep up her elegant house, while waiting for him to return. When she found he did not come, she with her old



servant followed him to this country, and the city she had left years before. I give you just the outlines of her story.

“When I saw their extreme poverty I tried to think how I could best serve her, and get her away from her miserable surroundings, to a more quiet, comfortable, and safe place for she was then in the first stages of consumption. All at once I thought of a Mrs. Connor, a good worthy woman, a staunch Christian, of old Scotch ancestry. She is a member of my church, but attends the Mission; she and her only child, a son, live in a snug little cottage not far from the Mission. She is a true widow of the gospel, very charitable and always ready with her mite. I called upon her and told her about my convert, who was a very delicate woman, and how I would like to find a room for her, and her old servant who was her only support. Her cottage is not more than three or four rooms, but she had a small wing built on, about three or four years before; she happened to have no particular use for this room, and said, any one I would recommend, was welcome to it. It was so arranged that they could keep house, and be entirely to themselves. What I wanted was to get my convert, where she would have quiet, and at the same time be protected. When she and the black woman took possession of Mrs. Connor’s wing, both maid and mistress, were delighted with their change of fortune, and the lady seemed to pick up amazingly, and take an interest in everything about her. She even busied herself in sewing for the children of the neighbors, and

added a little to defray the household expenses in that way. For nearly a year, the disease did not seem to make much inroad, but she has failed rapidly in the last six months. I paid her a short visit this afternoon, and found her very much worse, she cannot last more than a few weeks or a month. I thought of you and wondered why I had not spoken of her to you before. While she is quite comfortable at Mrs. Connor's, still I think it would be great happiness to her to see you, it would make her feel that she was not dying alone, and that some of her own kind took an interest in her. You cannot help but like her, and feel a deep sympathy for her. Mrs. Leighton has been a woman of great beauty, and brilliance of mind."

"Mrs. Leighton;" cried Gartha, her cheeks blanching white, as she rose up, "Oh, some way I—, I—, felt all the while that your convert was she. When you first mentioned the elderly black woman, I knew then that we had found little Charley's mother. Oh, I knew that God would bring things about in his own way." And Gartha covered her face with her hands and wept.

"My dear Mrs. Lowell," said Cyrus Alvin, rising and placing his tea-cup in its saucer.

"You recollect," said Gartha, recovering her composure, I have told you little of Charley's history. That I was president of the children's home, and was present when an elderly negress brought him a baby six months old to the Home. Last fall the same woman came for him, after more than five years. I



could learn nothing from her concerning herself, or the boy's parents, so of course I refused to give her the child. She begged hard for him, and pledged herself, to return the boy in five hours, if I would but let her take him; but I would not unless she consented to have my gardener go with her. She objected to this and went away and has not been seen or heard of since. I then made inquiries about the boy, and the inquiries led to locating a certain gentleman of this city. I paid him a visit,—and learned from him the story you have told me to-night, with the exception that we knew nothing of Mrs. Leighton's whereabouts. Oh, yes dear Dr. Alvin, you have found her, and I in tracing Charley's parents, found the husband she deserted years ago. I will go and see her the first thing in the morning. Oh, I can hardly wait until the day breaks; oh, dear Mr. Alvin, to you it has been given to bring Annette Lefarge back to God."

"Let us pray," said Cyrus. They both knelt in prayer. He offered one of those soul touching prayers he was noted for, and which never failed but to touch the most hardened sinner. This prayer, though short, was full of sympathy and pathos, pleading for the happy death of the sick woman, and giving thanks, that she like the strayed sheep had been found, and brought back to the fold. And like the prodigal had returned, and they would kill for her the fatted calf. When he finished they rose from their knees.

"I shall take the seven o'clock train to the city, in the morning, as the electric car will take so much

longer; I will go straight to Mrs. Connor. If she is the Mrs. Leighton we want, Charley's mother, I shall have her brought to my home here; the boy need never know she is his mother, neither any one else of my household. Anne my housekeeper or Fanny, the boy's nurse, never questions my actions in any matter of this kind."

This decision of Gartha's gladdened the heart of the Rev. Cyrus, yet it was no surprise to him, coming from Gartha. He had known her to do the most noble and heroic acts, and was not astonished when she proposed bringing Mrs. Leighton to her home, to have her under her own care. As he stood in the doorway taking leave of her, she held out both her hands to him; he took them reverently in his, bent over them a moment, then left her. Thus he came, thus they parted; this man who exercised such an influence upon her whole after life.



## CHAPTER X.

HE BRUSHED SOMETHING LIKE A TEAR FROM HIS EYES.

ON the same evening, which Cyrus Alvin, paid his visit to Mrs. Lowell's home the Maples, for the purpose of consulting with her how to make the dying Mrs. Leighton's last days on earth comfortable and happy, Potipher Gilphin sat alone in his library at Snow-ball hill in Elm-lane. The bright coal fire in the grate, that gave the room such warmth, color and cheerfulness, on the fall evening we were first introduced to it, was missing to-night. It being deep winter, and the house having all the conveniences and luxuries, which modern times afford, and money can buy was heated by steam.

After dinner Elsie generally sat with her father, an hour or more in the library, chatting to him of the incidents and happenings of the day. She would relate things in a bright, piquant fashion, full of quaint, original sayings all her own; and which always charmed her hearers. She had a brilliancy of speech that developed more and more as she grew older, and which often brought to her father memories of one who for years he had put out of his life. "Yes, unfortunately," he would say to himself, on these evenings, "she has inherited her mother's beauty and mental traits; had she but inherited her height, with

my traits of character, it would have made me happier." Yet he would put the thought aside, as he looked lovingly and tenderly upon her, and repay her every once and awhile by a quiet laugh, that was a sort of a noiseless chuckle; and he would think to himself, as he turned his glance from her and sighed, Well, she has been carefully reared by a good woman; she has been educated in the best schools of our land; she has had every advantage that money can procure; besides she has a certain mental depth and strength her mother did not possess. Of course her character is not yet formed. Dear Potipher, as if character was ever formed this side of the grave. Years are the test of character.

He had sent Frank Connors that afternoon, with a fine team of horses and sleigh, to take her and Martha Hays driving; he wished them to enjoy the snow while it lasted. Some of the young clerks at the wholesale house were greatly exercised over the idea of Mr. Gilphin sending that plebeian, Frank Connors, who a few years before was nothing but an office boy, to Snow-ball hill with a stylish turn-out, to take his daughter sleigh driving. One young man holding quite an important position in the house of Gilphin & Co., of good family, and an acquaintance of young Gresham's on the Hill, remarked to young Gresham when they met, that he supposed the reason that Gilphin sent that Connors fellow to drive his daughter the other day was that he knew there would be no danger of love making; for of course that Connors fellow wouldn't presume.



My dear young man, Potipher Gilphin was a general in his way; a general in the business world; a quiet, keen, astute, observing man. From childhood up the world had been his school; in his dealings with men he let nothing escape him that he did not jot down in his mental note-book. Since starting in business for himself, he had handled men of all ages, and nearly all conditions, so far as the work-a-day and business life was concerned. He found that few men, but what have some besetting sin; that few men have moral stability, and integrity of purpose, and that few possess the sustaining power to succeed. Oh, yes, they want to succeed, but they don't want trouble, or to work and to wait. Like in religion, most people want the crown, but they don't want to shoulder the cross. Frank Connors was one of those babies that are born now and then into the world, and are the uncommon result of what we call whole man. Tennyson says, "A nation's king may be born in a cottage." I do not mean great geniuses in sciences, literature, art or statesmanship. A man may be any one of these, and be far from being a whole man. Gladstone was in every sense a whole man. In his long career of statesmanship he proved equal to every emergency; besides the purity of his private character, and great moral worth, and Christian worth. No man or party accused him, he was the tool of no gang. Washington was a whole man, also Lincoln, and General Lee. To be a whole wholesome man, perfectly free, no other man owning him, is a great thing, a godlike thing.

Frank Conners from a child up had the even balance which is the sure test of strong manhood. From the day he entered the wholesale house of Gilphin & Co., an office boy, Mr. Gilphin kept close watch upon him. Whatever he was told to do he did it quickly and willingly; the humblest task he was put to do, he did well, and it was the better for his hands having touched it. When asked about things in the office, or concerning the errands which he was often sent on, he answered intelligently and truthfully. His manner towards those older and in authority was always respectful, but never servile. To Mr. Gilphin he was ever attentive and quick to serve him. The boy did this more from real affection, and the feeling that he needed his help, than from any selfish motive. None of the ways in which he made himself useful to Mr. Gilphin was lost on that gentleman. He would help him on with his overcoat, and if it were winter or bad weather, some way Mr. Gilphin would find his rubbers or overshoes laid right where he could see them; and those umbrellas, which everybody claims, and no one ever seems in possession of, Mr. Gilphin's was carefully looked after, and slipped into his hand as he got ready to leave the office to go to lunch, or other affairs which took him out during the day. As an eminent woman once remarked to her illustrious husband, when he presented her with a first copy of his famous book, "The French Revolution," that it took genius to appreciate genius. The boy was always surprising Gilphin by some bright remark, or



thoughtful act, and it did not go unapproved by him.

So little by little the boy was promoted, and whatever Mr. Gilphin gave Frank to do he found the young man brought capacity to do it well. When he sent him on this afternoon to take his daughter and Martha Hays out sleighing, there was but one thought in his mind, that they would be in the best of company, besides he handled horses splendidly.

Elsie would have made an artist famous could he have sketched her as she reclined in an easy chair, by the library table, her father's vis-a-vis. Her serge dress of dark red fitted her petite fairy-like figure to perfection. Over it she wore a cut-away sleeveless jacket of black velvet, embroidered in gold braid. Her luxuriant brown hair was coiled high on top of her head and fastened with a gold dagger. At her feet, stretched full length on a rug, was Beppo, very tired after his sleigh-ride. He occupied a seat beside Frank and was all excitement, as the sleigh-bells merrily jingled, and glided over the snow. Beppo seemed to approve greatly of Frank's driving. He would sit upon his haunches, take a survey of the horses, then look up in Frank's face, drop his under jaw, show his teeth, as much as to say, "Isn't this jolly?" Then he would curl himself down at Frank's feet, but with his big brown eyes always on the alert.

"Papa," said Elsie, stopping abruptly in her talk, and leaning back in her chair, "how came Frank Conners to understand managing horses so well? You should have seen him drive those horses to-day; they were a very spirited, restive team, but he handled

them superbly. They seemed to know they had a master behind them."

Her father looked at her a moment askance. For the first time certain thoughts chased each other through his mind. He had all along been thinking her simply a child, but her words had awakened him to the reality, she had grown to be a woman. Of course he had made some preparations for her homecoming from school, he wanted her to have things as other girls had, whose fathers were possessed of the means to gratify them. But he had forgotten all about her being of an age, when she wanted the companionship of young people of both sexes, and she must not be debarred from their society. As he looked upon her bright, piquant beauty, it had never come to him so forcibly that she was now at a time of life that she would be apt to have her romance; when young maids seek for a mate. The thought startled him. Well, she would not be left to herself to choose one. She had no mother, the secret of her mother's shame had been carefully kept from her; she had been led to believe that her mother died in her infancy. She had a photograph of her; it was taken when about her own age, which she secretly loved and cherished, as children do, whose baby eyes have gazed into the parent's face, but memory fails to keep the imprint.

"Frank Conners, horses," he murmured after a long pause, and shaking his head, as the tall manly form, and intelligent face of Frank rose before him, "Frank Conners has been about horses ever since he



was a small boy. You remember he used to drive Tom a great deal before I sold him. Tom was a fine horse, and now he often drives the new wagon team. I never saw Frank's like about managing things. I have men in my employ for years, and twice his age, that in a rush of business, get all tangled up, but Frank—well, he's a very promising young man. You recollect he took you out to drive in the spring-wagon, when quite a lad. He told me something about being detained one day, that you insisted upon him taking you for a drive in the country."

"Oh, what a delightful ride it was," she gave a ringing laugh. "I have never enjoyed anything since as I did that drive. We had fine sport with Beppo, if he heard the faintest echo in the woods, of a shot, his ears were up, and he would give a leap from the wagon, and away with him. He would not be gone but a few moments when he would overtake us, all out of breath, his tongue hanging half out of his mouth, and bound into the wagon, and drop down at my feet." She bent over and patted the dog's head, who responded by licking her small white hand. "Mama Marta is going to arrange for me a small evening party. What do you think papa about sending an invitation to Frank Connors, or would you rather have it come verbally from yourself?" She rose up and stood beside the table.

"My daughter, I have no objection to your sending an invitation to Frank Connors; he is a fine, manly young fellow, and in every sense worthy of the hospi-

talities of my house. Still, I would be careful, he is yet but a lad, a poor boy, do not lead him to expect anything, which in your position, and as my daughter, and above all in your heart, you could not carry out or fulfill."

"Dear papa, I think the young men of this generation are wise for their years. I can see and feel that Frank Conners, poor boy though he is, was born to command; why he looked like a young king to-day. He ought, with some help, make a career for himself."

"I am pleased to hear that Martha and yourself have thought of giving this entertainment," said Mr. Gilphin, pretending not to notice his daughter's last remark. "There is Mrs. Gresham, she is quite prominent in social circles, supposing Martha and yourself consult with her, she will be a great help to you. I want you to enjoy all the advantages possible, and gather about you people of the best morals, taste, refinement and culture. I wish you to see something of the world before you begin to think of a husband. You are very young yet, and have plenty of time for that."

"You are a dear, good, wise father, and I thank you for the suggestion of taking Mrs. Gresham into our confidence. She is just the woman to consult, for this party is virtually my coming out, and we must make it as pleasant an affair as possible. Mama Marta knowing you cared so little for society, thought to have it just a small gathering of young people, but



now I shall make it my *début*. Good night, dear papa," and with that she left the room and went upstairs followed by Beppo.

Potipher Gilphin, unlike most men, who rise from the ranks, and make for themselves a prominent place in the business marts, had none of the vulgar ambition for social position which is the goal of so many men and women of the *nouveau riche*. The idea of giving his daughter to a young man of dissolute habits, because he could boast of the blue blood of his ancestors, and whose family would condescendingly tolerate the daughter of a rich parvenue, simply for her money; never entered his head. Oh, Mr. Gilphin did not bother himself about what we call society. The company of men and women of character, refinement and culture banded together for the purpose of high and noble aims, seeking to better their fellow beings, and leaving humanity the richer, in what tends to elevate, is another thing. But to call a few idle people, that do nothing but eat, drink and sleep, that merely live for the gratification of the senses, while the rest of humanity toil and do the world's work, to term this handful society was preposterous to him.

After Elsie left the library, Mr. Gilphin rose from his seat and began pacing up and down the floor. Seldom since Elsie had grown to womanhood, that when in her company she did not by some look, word or gesture remind him of her mother. In the early years, when the battle raged within him, for mastery over the love of his youth, his boy's dream, his boy's

ideal, to put her out of his life, never, never, more to think of her ; never, never, more to look upon her face. Yet, now and then, an expression in the child's eyes brought her image before him, and it would persist in remaining with him for hours, and the battle would have to be fought over again. And now, after years, when he thought all interest in her, all memory of her, had been eliminated, he had been for four months hunting and trying to trace Charles Leighton. He had engaged two of the best detectives in the state and put them on the man's track. They had at last located the Count Henri de Gascon, which is none other than Charles Leighton, that very day, at a little hotel in the suburbs. He had disguised himself and accompanied one of the detectives in a carriage, leaving the carriage on the southwest side of the hotel. They had timed themselves almost to the minute, for as they came to the corner of the lane, which ran between the open lot and the hotel, the detective whispered, "The Count, quick, look." At that moment the Count came out the door of the ladies' entrance. Potiphar Gilphin, answered the detective at his side, without a bend of his head, a twitch of a muscle, or a shade of emotion upon his face, "Yes, it is Charles Leighton." And he and the man at his side walked past the Count Henri de Gascon.

They turned the corner and passed in front of the hotel, the Count going west. When they came to the end of the hotel, they turned again and walked as far as the lane, cut up through it and came out on the corner of the lot, where they got into the carriage.



Mr. Gilphin stepped inside while the detective jumped upon the box with the driver, and they followed on after the Count, keeping at some distance behind him, until he entered the gate of the Weston Villa, Miss Graham's residence, went up the gravel walk, rang the bell at the great hall door, and was admitted by the butler.

"There was a time and not so very long ago," he said to himself, stopping before the window, and crossing his arms, "that had I met Charles Leighton face to face, as I did to-day, I would have struck him to the earth dead, but since then other influences have been brought to bear"—and there rose before him the tall figure of a woman, as she stood that October night in the library, a woman of rare, singular grace and beauty; with a charm so unusual that it was a delight to think of her. He could see her now as she stood that rainy autumn evening, speaking of things which he had never thought of, or if ever the ghost of them came by any chance to his ear, were treated as something vague and remote; only read of in books. And when he did put them from him, with a smile of contempt, as not practicable; he had no time for idle romances. He had heard ministers preach of conversions, and forgiveness, and all that sort of thing, but it was not so in real life. Men did not forgive—yes, the Christ taught forgiveness and lived it, but He was divine. In his dealings with men, he saw that the passions of selfishness, covetousness, vindictiveness, jealousy, hate and revenge, were what colored most men and women's actions; that they

were strong even in death. And nothing but some superhuman power could eradicate them.

But she brought the opposite teaching so near to him, the real purpose of Christ's mission, and what He taught; she had brushed aside the mist and clouds, and had shown him, that down deep in his heart, there coiled something ugly, hateful; something he petted and hugged for years, ready at the opportune moment to spring into a ferocious beast. She showed him, that love and forgiveness were the real and stern issues which led to life and happiness. Yes this is the strange part that woman plays, one blights for years a man's life, another is a ministering angel, with the healing touch in her fingers, bringing rest and peace to the tortured mind, and health to the sick soul. Eve tempted Adam, but Mary brought forth Christ.

Yes, this beautiful, radiant woman had come into his life, giving him new hope, and a vision of broader fields of action. Her large spiritual eyes had flashed their light into his, like the rays of the sun, brightening the dark clouds which hung over his past, and he felt he was going to live anew.

"The man I saw to-day was unlike the young man I knew fifteen years ago at the age of twenty-five. He was then a fine specimen of high-bred physical young manhood. His polished manners, his genial disposition, kindly and lovable; but vain, passionate, pleasure hunting, indolent and vacillating. To-day his face bore the marks of his past indulgence. Yes, they must have led a gay life while his money lasted,



and when it was gone he threw her off. 'Such men bear no burdens. How could he desert her, and his little son; I suppose she was woman enough to feel her degradation, and incapacity to rear the little fellow. But where is Annette, Elsie's mother?' he cried inwardly, folding his arms tighter over his breast, to choke down the pain that smote his heart. He turned from the window, and began to pace the floor again. "If I knew how to go about tracing her; if I could but find some clue to her whereabouts; where he left her, where she was last seen; I could have her provided for by setting aside a monthly allowance to be paid at my bankers. Anything to keep her from going down, down; for to throw a woman like Annette, used to the luxuries of a princess, upon the world destitute, to earn an honest living, impossible; what could she do? Oh, my God, this then is what it is to feel, what it is to be touched by the spirit of forgiveness? Oh, my God, I cry out in my anguish for help to find the lost one. Help Thou, my God, my helplessness in this matter. I have plenty, thousands upon thousands of dollars, in stocks, railroad bonds, government bonds, lying idle in the vaults of the bank, of which I am one of the directors, and Elsie's mother, perhaps cold, hungry and homeless; seeking for shelter in some den of infamy." He brushed something like a tear from his eyes, stopped before the window and drew aside the curtain.

It was a cold, clear, star-light night. Snow-ball hill and the lane lay sheeted in glistening white. The tall elms shivered in their bare branches, and made a dark

tracery line, cutting against the deep violet arch above. The pines and fir trees along the path, rose up like black shrouded ghosts, keeping out all intruders, even the ghost of poor Annette Lefarge. The city laid to the southeast, looking like great hills massed together, the smoke from its chimneys rising up, up, as if from volcanoes, and curling slenderly like misty columns, until dispersed by the rarer air, and jeweled sky. "Yes, yes," he said, leaving the window, and throwing himself into a chair, "she, too, must be found." He gulped down the big lump of bitterness that rose in his throat, from the memories of the night she deserted him, buried his face in his hands and sat a long time in thought.

He had not seen Mrs. Lowell since the evening they met at the Mission home. Since then he had found to a certainty who the boy's parents were, and had located Charles Leighton, who went under the assumed title of the Count Henri de Gascon. He was to be married in a few weeks to a Miss Graham. He had papers placed in his hands that morning by the detectives that would send the Count to a felon's cell, but he did not care to take any action in the matter until he could see how things developed. He would wait and have an interview with Mrs. Lowell, and give her his plans for tracing Annette Lefarge. If necessary he would send a man to Paris in search of her, and if found to arrange matters so that she could receive a monthly income. He rose from his seat, crossed to the mantel-piece, looked at the clock; its hour hand pointed to twelve. He turned the lamp



out, left the library, went into the hall, locked and bolted the front door, turned the gas in the hall low, and went up the stairs. Half way on the landing he met Beppo, who wagged his tail and saluted him with a sniff, and a friendly dog gurgle; then went down stairs and stretched himself full length before the front door, his usual bed for the night. Potipher Gilphin went to his room, little dreaming of the events that were fast crowding around him.

## CHAPTER XI.

SHE KNEW THE DYING WOMAN WAS THE WIFE OF  
POTIPHER GILPHIN'S YOUTH.

It was nearly nine o'clock the following morning when Gartha reached Hetty Conners' cottage and knocked at the door, which was answered in person by Mrs. Conners. Mrs. Conners recognized Gartha, whom she had met on several occasions at the Mission. Hetty was surprised and startled to see Mrs. Lowell standing before her when she opened the door, but was also nearly beside herself with delight when Gartha made her errand known, and who it was she had come to see. She invited her into the sitting-room, where a fire of bright coals burned in a parlor stove. Gartha had brought Johnny, the gardener's fourteen-year-old boy, to carry a heaping basket she had prepared of good things for the invalid.

"I'm heartily glad you've come ma'am," said Hetty, her hands suddenly taking refuge under her clean gingham apron. I say clean, as if Hetty Conners could have anything about her person, or house, that was not clean, spin spankin clean. "Mrs. Leighton ha' been very poorly the last few days, the old colored woman could na leave her, she's a goin' fast. I'll just go in an' prepare her, though Mr. Alvin ha'



spoken to her about your comin', I think it best to break it to her mesel, that a friend of Dr. Alvin ha' came to pay her a visit."

Mrs. Leighton was seated in her rocking-chair by the stove. She had risen but a short while before and Aunt Louise had just completed her mistress's toilet, when Mrs. Conners brought word that there was a lady in the sitting-room, a friend of Dr. Alvin, who wished to see Mrs. Leighton. Annette sat with her head leaning back on a pillow; she wore the same figured Chinese silk house-gown she wore the cold January evening of a few weeks before, when we meet her again after two years, in the room of the little wing of Hetty Conners' cottage. About the throat was arranged some fluffy black lace, which heightened the whiteness of her neck. And thrown over her shoulders in careless grace was her paisley shawl, though old its colors were still rich and fresh, and accentuated the paleness of her face. Her dark luxuriant hair, that had lost none of its lustre, laid in waves upon the broad blue-veined forehead. Her elbows rested on the arms of the chair, and her slender white hands were clasped together on her lap. Louise stood by the cupboard, where she had just placed the cup and saucer she had been wiping. When Gartha entered the old black woman's cheek became ashen in hue, as her eyes, for a second rested on Mrs. Lowell, then she turned her back to Gartha and buried her head in her apron. "Oh, Lo'd an' Massa," she cried to herself, "it's she—the Superiess ob da institute— Oh, blèssed Lo'd, di ways suah

enough is pass finden out. Oh, blessed Saviour, Ise an ole sinna, Ise ben an awful sinful ole niga, an now Ye's send an angel of macy to me an' mine; to my Miss Annette, kase we turned our backs on de debil, an our faces to Ye." She raised her head, and with her apron wiped the tears from her eyes, then turned smilingly to Gartha, who returned it with a bow of pleasant recognition.

Gartha knew when she saw the old negress that the pale, emaciated, dying woman who sat before her was Annette Lefarge, the wife of Potipher Gilphin's youth. The same face she saw that night in the shadow of the door-way of the Mission hall, whose great, dark violet eyes flashed one glance into hers; a glance which seemed to tell the whole story of her life, and which seemed to haunt her and say to her, that those mysterious cords which pull, tie and knot lives together, were at work drawing theirs. But the face she now looked upon was more softened, purified, and had that spiritual calm that comes from a soul at rest with God. Gartha felt deeply moved, with all her self-control, the tears welled to her eyes as she bent over and took the thin wasted hand Mrs. Leighton proffered her between her own. Then she seated herself on the chair Hetty Conners placed for her near the invalid.

"I am a personal friend of Dr. Alvin," said Gartha, repressing her emotions. "He called upon me yesterday and told me of a lady friend of his, an invalid in whom he was deeply interested, and that he would like me to visit the first opportunity I had. I live in



the suburbs north of here, I came as early as possible this morning as I was so anxious to see you, and if it's in my power to be of use to you—"

"It is so kind of you to take the trouble to come so far to visit any one so unworthy as I. While I am pleased to see you, and grateful to Dr. Alvin, I am not worth so much care on his part, and attention on yours," said Mrs. Leighton, a smile mingling with the tears that moistened her dark eyes.

"You are not unworthy, dear; it is the greatest pleasure to me to be of use to you; that is what we are here for; it is what to live means. To help those who cannot help themselves; to make the hours and the days pass pleasantly by to those who are ill. I have come as a friend and sister, and want you to look upon me as such; my desire is to make you comfortable and happy. I am going to take yourself and your nurse to my home in the suburbs, where she will be relieved of all responsibility but to attend upon you. She and Mrs. Connors will get you ready to leave here by to-morrow morning. I shall be here about this time, or a little later, with a carriage. The snow has nearly all melted and the ride will not be long to my home."

"I fear, dear, that I will be a great annoyance to you. To take a sick woman like me to your home, with Louise, will be to burden yourself and your household. I have but a few weeks at most to live, and I am quite comfortable here. I live not in my surroundings now; I have found it makes little difference where we are, or what we have, if we are at peace

with Him, then we are rich indeed. Mrs. Conners has been exceedingly kind to me, but there is one request I wish to make of you, dear and noble lady, that when I am gone, you will find a home for Louise, my old nurse, who carried me in her arms, from the hour I first opened my eyes to the light. And since my companion in days of prosperity, when I had no thought for the morrow, only the excitement, pleasure and gaities it might bring. And now in adversity and illness, my faithful and true friend," she clasped her long tapering fingers together, as her great eyes rested appealingly on Gartha's face.

Aunt Louise turned an imploring gaze to Mrs. Lowell, and Gartha answered back with a nod, which conveyed to Louise that nothing would be revealed until the proper time.

"My house in the suburbs is a lovely cottage with plenty of room," said Gartha. "We have everything in abundance, milk, cream, fresh butter, chickens, eggs, fruit and vegetables of all kinds, and all the help I need. That is the only way to live; any other way is simply existing. I am a great believer in the home, if it is only a cottage of two rooms with a little patch of ground around it, a flower garden, cats, dogs and chickens, these are great humanizers. If I were the king of a nation I would see to it that every laborer and working man had his cottage and patch of ground. A man loves his home, but no man or woman has ever been known to love their boarding-house, room or hotel. As it is we are a nation of homeless people. Yourself and Louise will be no



trouble, just the reverse; I wish you to be with me so that I can see to your wants and care for you. It is Dr. Alvin's wish and my desire to make you as happy as possible while you are with us," and Gartha bent over, lifted from the arm of the chair the white hand, and pressed it between her own two.

"Have you always been like you are now?" said Mrs. Leighton, with a glow of admiration in her large eyes, and a small, round, red spot about as big as the rim of a **thimble** burned each cheek. "I think you must," she said, answering her own question. "I have never met a woman like you; yes, you know nothing of the world I have lived in. You are so innocent and pure, and still young, with such a noble bearing; you have also wealth and social position; and strange these, with so rare and radiant a beauty, have not been a snare to you."

"My dear Mrs. Leighton, while I may not have lived just in your world, I have lived; oh, yes, dear God, I have lived. The years of my girlhood were passed like most bright girls, in the love of a mother, and in the school-room. I have lived in the love of another, a man, who was as I supposed the ideal of all my girlhood dreams, and since I have seen every phase of life. But from a child up I have had the highest ideals, aims and aspirations. I hate the system which condones the sins and immoralities of men, and makes the woman suffer. While I think, many of their wrongs have been of their own making, and come from their lethargy, narrowness of vision, in not seeing their power, to make life for themselves

and their sisters broader and freer from the trammels which society burdens them with, yet there is no sex in sin. I hate the system of educating the heads of children and not their hearts, sentiments and spirituality. Letting the boy and girl grow up with dwarfed minds, going through life looking at things with a twisted vision. I hate the system which gives a few men the right to take the work of the best brains of the world, in literature, science and art, in the marts, fill their coffers and not give a cent to those who produced them. Jesus said the laborer is worthy of his meat."

"If you are a specimen of the new woman, she is one of intellect, soul and spirit; it is strange there is not more women like you. In you the Lord has shown me what a failure my own life has been. He gave me beauty, talent and many rare gifts of mind, but like the prodigal son, I used them in riotous living. Women like you elevate men; you lead them to live up to all that is best and highest. Women like me like to fascinate, and pander to their baser nature, we triumph in the senses," said Mrs. Leighton with a tinge of color on her cheeks, while her eyes for a moment sparkled and danced with bright intelligence.

"Dear, you have been the kind of woman destined to be loved by men, fatal to them, but not to be made happy. I am not the kind of woman that men love; I demand too much. I am of a type that most men cry away with, we will have none of her. To live as she requires we should, is to disarrange the whole order of things, and we will not have it. There may



be a few men, here and there, of the Dr. Alvin kind, who may appreciate me, but they are the exception."

"Yes, but such men consider only the exceptional woman, worthy of their love and homage. Oh, what happiness to be loved by such a man. Men like Dr. Alvin do not woo a woman to-day with protestations of love, to betray her on the morrow. Do the vilest deeds, the most treacherous acts, and in a few years, when passion cools, passion which was never based on a spark of honor or truth, desert her. This is the fate of most women of the world, no matter how beautiful. You said that such women as me are destined to be loved by men; yes, men of the world, sensual men. We receive back just what we give; we pander to the animal passions, in return we receive but animal love; the hand which fondly caresses to-day, strike us a fatal blow on the morrow. This is the price we pay for disregarding the divine order of things, the sacred law of marriage. I say sacred, for it is the only light in which we can hold marriage, as in it lies woman's safety and dignity; indeed we might say the safety of the whole human family. With a woman of the world, when one man abandons her, there are others always ready to go over the same frenzied protestations of love, the same act in the drama. But there are women who do not get so low that they care to repeat it more than once in their life." She laid her head back on the pillow, the red spots burned deeper on each cheek, and the long lashes closed over the eyes, which were dry and hot from the pain that gnawed at her heart.

"Dear, few women who have lived, loved and have married but what have suffered," and Gartha, observing the invalid's exhaustion, rose, went to the basket she had brought and took from it a bottle of currant wine, asked Louise for a glass and poured it half full and handed it to Mrs. Leighton, who sipped several mouthfuls, and seemed refreshed by it. Then Gartha took leave of Mrs. Leighton, who was completely captivated by her. "I cannot express how deeply I feel your kindness. Mrs. Conners has been more than a friend to me and mine, but I shall be happy to go with you on the morrow. Who am I that my Heavenly Father should be so mindful of me, while so many others are left to die, unknown and neglected?"

"Oh, Mistis Lowell, honey," cried Louise, as she closed the door of Mrs. Leighton's room, and she stood with Gartha in the sitting-room, "Oh, Lody, Lody, di ways suah is pass finden out," and she buried her face in her apron. "Oh, Mistis Lowell, Ise couldn't ab believed my eyes, dat it was ye when Ise seed ye standin' afo' me. Den Ise feared so about de chile. Ise so mighty glad, Mistis, honey, ye kept dat to yesef; das' no use now, honey, she be so poo'ly, an' it bes' to let her go calmly in de Lo'd. Oh, honey, honey, Ise so full, Ise so ova-come, Ise donna what to say. Oh, Mistis Lowell, ye hab lifted a heavy load ob dis ole woman's shouldas. Ise a worrin, an' a worrin' about my po' Miss Annette, she be a dyin', Ise suah she be gone las' night, an' now de Lo'd hab sent ye to holp me."



"Leave everything to me, Louise," said Gartha, laying her hand caressingly on Louise's shoulder. "Dr. Alvin and myself have arranged it all. You will have nothing to do or think of but to attend on your mistress; get yourself and her ready to leave here by to-morrow morning. I had Anne put up enough food to last you both until I come. Give Mrs. Leighton all she can eat and plenty of the currant wine, it wont hurt her. I want to see Mrs. Conners before I go." With that Hetty came in, and Gartha told her of her plans, and that she was coming in the morning to take Mrs. Leighton to her home in the suburbs, and thanked her for her kindness to the sick woman. "You are like the widow in the gospel, others gave out of their abundance, you giveth all you had."

"The Lord ha' blessed me greatly, an' it wa' na much to share wie the gentle sick lady. I wie sure miss her now, but it's better so. I canna make her so comfortable a' she wa be wie you, an' she needs all her nurse's attention." Hetty Conners' broad face beamed on Gartha as she reluctantly drew her hand from Mrs. Lowell's and hid it under the fold of her apron.

Aunt Louise with red eyes and tear-stained cheeks, went back to her mistress's room, and began to remove the things from the basket, and as she did she laid them on the table. There was a lovely, large loaf of white, home-made bread, a jar of strawberry preserves, a roasted chicken, brown and delicious looking. A bottle full of fresh cream, and a small roll of

fresh butter, a paper of fragrant tea, enough to last two or three days. There was everything of the best and daintiest. And Louise, who stood with her back to Mrs. Leighton, at sight of all these good things, was so overcome that she turned around, looked at Mrs. Leighton, who was sitting with her head resting on the pillow, her eyes closed, her face white and with the stamp of death on its beautiful lineaments. She stepped forward and threw herself at mistress's feet.

"Oh, my Miss Annette, my chile, Ise be'n an ole sinna, an ole sinful Niga. Ise have a black face, an' a black soul. Da was in de souf on yoe's mother plantation in de ole home, an ole Mammy Marranda, she hab a black face, but all de white folks an' de blacks sed she hab de whitest soul in all de country round. But praise de Lod, dis monin, dat He hab macy on me, an shown me His goodness, an dat He send angels in de guise ob men an women to do His wok. Dat He send His only begotten Son in de likeness ob man, to teach us de way of salvation. An show us how to lib, an' how to die. But oua hearts ab so harden an' unbelieven, f'om liben in de flesh an debil, dat ou eyes am a holden, an de light shet out, and de spirit canno enter, an de message am closed. Oh, my Mistis, honey, Ise pray de Lod dat de man who lef ye to de macy ob de wold, an broke ye heart, dat He will deal wid him, an—"

"Hishe-ee—," said Mrs. Leighton, bending over and laying her thin white hand caressingly upon the old black woman's head.



“Oh, honey, Miss Annie, Ise so full, my heart am sore. It’ll break if Ise don’ speak out an’ thank de Lo’d fo’ His goodness.”

“Oh, my friend,” said Mrs. Leighton softly, while the long black lashes veiled her eyes, as if to stay the tears that streamed from them down her cheeks. “Friend of my childhood, friend of the years of my sinful, useless life. Friend now in desertion, illness, poverty and death. Oh, Louise, dear nurse and maid, your face is black, but your soul is far, far, whiter than mine. My sins have been many and great, but He who cast from Mary Magdalene seven devils cast them out of me, and my heart is clean, made whiter than snow, because washed in the blood of the Lamb. The world scoffs at miracles, dear; I am a miracle, who can understand the work done in my soul unless they experience it; that such a work can be done is marvelous. Now I know what it is to be born again.”

There was no difference now between the woman of birth, education, talent and beauty. The woman who had dazzled some of the most brilliant men in Europe, the woman whom titled men, savants, artists, statesmen paid court to, than the old Negress who knelt at her feet, her white hand caressing her turbaned head. It was all merged in one, and that soul, the soul of the old slave, the bond woman, with her black face, rose up white above all material conditions of life, and in her nobility of character, her long faithfulness and unselfish love for her mistress, annihilated all distinction and they stood equally soul to soul.

## BOOK IV.

### CHAPTER I.

AND SPREAD HER WHITE JEWELLED FINGERS APART.

It was the day before Effie Graham's wedding, the hour eight in the evening, Miss Graham is in her boudoir, she is standing before the large dressing-case. She is clad in a house robe, of white camel's hair, a mass of creamy lace and ribbon. She stands gazing down on something in a jewel case, wound about its raised dias of purple velvet, that looks like a chain of stars, picked from the milky way, of a clear cold night, when not a fleck is to be seen in the sky. Her eyes glow with delight, as they rest upon their blue white flame, dancing, sparkling, and scintillating. She lifts them from their velvet cushioned bed and holds them lovingly to her fair cheek. Then crosses them over her temples, and twists them in the lustrous coils of her hair. "How beautiful," she murmurs to herself, as with a pleased gratified smile, she watches their gleam and flash from the rich satiny braids of brown hair. "A bridal gift from my fiancé, to be worn on the morrow, my wedding day. What a price he must have paid for them." She returns them to their place in their case, closes the lid and locks it.



The count could not have done anything more gallant to please his intended bride, than to send her this necklace of rare and costly gems. What a pity he paid such a price for them! He had given her but few presents since their engagement, but he now made up for it in the taste, workmanship, and costliness of his bridal gift. She knew the Count was not wealthy, he had given her a short sketch of his life. He told her, that his father was a wealthy American, who gave him a large sum of money when he became of age. He took this and went abroad and traveled all over Europe, during this tour he went to a village in Brittany, the beauty of which he was much pleased with. This village originally belonged to the estate of a nobleman which was situated about two miles from it. The estate at this time was for sale, but it was small. It belonged to an old titled Norman family, which had become extinct. He bought the estate and adopted the title and carried it through all the years he lived abroad. He told her also that he expected another fortune soon, that his father from some cause had cut him off in his will without a dollar. And that he was waiting for his brother and sister that were traveling in Europe to return, when he hoped the estate would be divided equally between them without the delay of the law. Effie while she loved the Count as much as it was in her nature to love any man, loved self better, and wealth, luxury, position, to such a degree that they became paramount to all else. She turned from the dressing-case, crossed the floor to the

mantel-piece, and looked at the small Swiss clock that stood upon it.

"I wonder what can keep the Count," she said to herself, "he told me he had a few matters to attend to which might keep him until after eight, but to look for him about half an hour later. It is now nine o'clock." She left the mantel and threw herself into a chair, before an open grate, where a small coal fire burned, the late April spring evening being cool. "We leave to-morrow evening for New York, and remain there a few weeks; then back again home. In June we go east visiting all the watering places, and in the fall we sail for Europe. I shall then have my longed for wish gratified, to see the old world; we will not stay there more than six months or a year, I prefer my own country, and my own home. I have a large fortune, it demands my care as a great deal of it is in real estate. I find my agents and even my attorney require constant watching. If I neglect to look after things they rob me unmercifully. I will now have the protection of a husband, but he can have no control of my estate, as my aunt left it in her will, that he can have but the benefit from the income, and only that through me.

"I shall be very happy," she mused, resting her glance on the Swiss clock. "I wonder what aunty would say if she were alive! I have more than fulfilled her wishes and all she hoped for, but never realized. She never dreamed that I would stand where I do to-night, a queen in the social world, and on the morrow to wed a polished cultured gentleman.



A man of family and position, and a title thrown in." She smiled, for Effie like Mrs. Calwald, had a sense of the weak points of humanity. She knew she was one of the mushrooms which spring up amidst the rank weeds of society's field; nurtured by its soil until sufficiently ripe, then it calls all its friends to come and see and admire.

"What is that?" she said in a low voice, looking towards the door. "I thought I heard a step on the stairs; dear me it's near ten o'clock, and the Count has not made his appearance, I believe the excitement and strain of being constantly on the go for weeks seeing to things, has left me a little nervous. He has probably been detained by some one; finds a hundred and one things to do; but he was to be here at nine at the farthest." She laid her head wearily against the back of the chair.

"I had a letter from Arthur Lowell to-day, he wished me happiness, but upbraided me. Wrote that I had ruined his life, made desolate his home, and sent his noble wife, into the world, a wanderer. I—how dare he write me thus." Her cheek flamed scarlet and the blood leaped hot and red, to her temples, and burned to the roots of her hair. She kicked her small slippered foot, out from under her long white wool tea-gown, then stamped it on the floor with wrath. "How dare he—I never took the trouble to even the turning of my little finger, to gain his admiration.—Yes he is handsome, imperious and cold as an iceberg, but I brought him to my feet. He did not think of his noble wife then. Noble,"—she gave a light giggle,

"I hate her, she had a way with her that made me feel uncomfortable, disagreeable and mean. She was one of your good women, superior women, bah,—the year I spent in their home, there was times I could have smote her to the floor where she stood, but I have had my revenge. I didn't want her husband fool,—he thought he could play with fire and not get singed. Ha, ha,—he went too far and his noble wife flew. Ha, ha, he didn't seem to mind her leaving him at the time. A year later he begged me to promise to marry him, if he sued for a divorce. He said he could obtain one any day, on the plea of desertion. Bah,—I knew you, Arthur, you love power too well, and my fortune was your incentive. I had higher aims, I did not care to start in my married life, with a scandal and divorce. I made up my mind when aunty died and left me her heiress, that my marriage must be the baptism that would wash away the taint on my own name, and her sins. Let him bring his noble wife back now, she is one of your women who look upon marriage as indissoluble. Heigh, ho, well—I shall have a husband, and protector, which will put an end to all this annoyance, that every single woman, whether rich or poor, has to contend with. Ah, there he is at last, I hear his step in the hall, but I did not hear the front door bell ring." She listens a moment. "How strangely still the house seems, what is that, I was sure I heard his step in the hall, and on the stairs, and some one just now part the portières. Aunt Madge, Johnson, Emma," she calls rising from her chair, but stopped



to look at the clock. "It's nearly eleven and Henri not here; there is something wrong, I feel it, something has happened to the Count. Oh—no—not now," she cried, raising her arms and clutching at her hair, "spare me, oh ye fates, spare me. To-morrow is my wedding day; to-morrow my triumph will be complete; over those who would push me aside, trample me,—crush me under their feet, as pitilessly as they would a worm. On the morrow I am to throw aside my own tainted name, for an honorable one, the name of a man, whose devotion to me in the last year and more has been unceasing; he loves me I am sure he does. To-morrow I am to be the Countess Henri de Gascon. Oh, it must be, it shall be, it will be." She stretched out her arms, held out her hands, and spread her white jewelled fingers apart, working them as if playing some musical instrument. "Ha, ha,—dear me how absurd, to have allowed myself to get into such a nervous state about Henri, as if anything could come between us now, to prevent our marriage. He will be here in a few minutes, or I shall receive some message from him. I will go to Aunt Madge's room, and consult with her."

A loud ring at the door. "At last," she cried, and rushed into the hall, and stood at the head of the stairs. "What is it Johnson?" she called to the black butler. "A letter fo' you Miss," he said, as he tripped up the stairs, and handed the white envelope lying on a silver salver. She reached out and took it from the salver, carried it to her boudoir, threw herself into a chair, she had a second before vacated, the open

the seal and read. "Dear and loved one, have been detained by a little matter of business, which will keep me until a late hour, too late to go to the Weston Villa. Cannot explain now, but will be with you as early as possible in the morning. Do not let this trouble you, but go to bed and sleep soundly.

"Yours until death,

"Henri Leighton, Count de Gascon."

The letter fluttered from her fingers to the floor, she bent over and buried her face in her hands.

Ah, my idolent ease-loving Effie, your cold, hard, selfish heart, which has never known a throb of sympathy for others, will be on the morrow, torn and lacerated, with the pain of humiliation. Your head will be bowed down to the dust, and you will be crushed by the boulders you have reared for yourself. Your tainted name shall follow you, and society which you have bidden to your nuptials, will not pity you; your ill-gotten money will not save you, society will go away in silence, only to mock, scoff and jeer. Retribution has come to you early, earlier than to some, but it comes to all like you sooner or later. "Thou shalt mete out measure for measure, and if thou art any man's debtor, thou shalt be cast into prison and stay there until the last farthing is paid."



## CHAPTER II.

HE SAID WITH A VOICE LOW WITH THE ECHOES OF  
PASSIONATE DESPAIR.

It was nearly eight o'clock, when the Count Henri de Gascon, entered his rooms, at the little hotel in the suburbs. He had been down in the city all day, attending to small matters, which every man wishes to square up as it were, before so important event as his marriage. As that is the beginning of a new life to both man and woman. He removed his hat, then his light overcoat, and threw it upon the table, as ever since the Count's return to his native land, he had dispensed with a valet. He goes to the wardrobe opens both doors, pulls down coats, pants, vests, dropping them on the floor; he then takes from the upper shelf two valises, and throws them on the floor beside his clothes. From one corner of the room he pulls out a large canvass trunk of foreign make, and begins to pack the clothes in it. As he does there comes a light knock at the door, and a young man enters, he is laden with a large bundle, and several boxes; they are from the Count's French tailor, and the large bundle contains his wedding suit. The boxes hold hat, gloves, and all the paraphernalia necessary for so important occasion. He ordered the man to unwrap the bundles.

"All here?" he asked, glancing hurriedly at each piece, as the young man takes them from their respective boxes, and laid them on the table.

"Oui, Monsieur, ils sont complete."

"The bill."

"Oui Monsieur."

He throws the young man, a silver dollar, "Drink to my health, to-morrow, I am to wed, wish me God speed." The young man bows almost to the floor with thanks, he will be pleased to drink to Monsieur's health and happiness, and takes his leave. The Count resumes his packing, he must be at the Weston Villa at least by nine o'clock. He has nearly finished, and is placing in his small Russian leather valise, brushes, combs, bottles, and toilet articles of every description; when there comes another knock at the door, a curious knock, a knock though light as a tap, but which sends the blood cold and chill, to the marrow, of the guilty conscience. How strange that a knock should convey so much, the young Frenchman with the bundles had knocked but a few moments before, but the Count felt no alarm at his knock. The door is flung open, and two men enter. The white marble mantle-piece from which the Count was just in the act of lifting a small package, was not whiter than his face, and he stood as if petrified to stone with his arm half raised, still holding the package. The men unbuttoned their coats and showed their uniform.

"Charles Leighton, alias Count Henri de Gascon," said one of the men, the smaller of the two, "you are charged with forging a note for five thousand dollars,



upon the Missouri state bank of commerce, payable to your order, and signed Potipher J. Gilphin. Charles Leighton, I arrest you in the name of the State of Missouri."

At these words all the future with its golden dreams of ease, luxury, wealth, the love of wife, and perhaps children, living together in happiness, enjoying a halo of quietness which he hoped in time would wipe out the past and bring about the stamp of respectability and standing, which most men desire sooner or later. All rose up before him, like spectres following one after another in sequence. But now by one act, he was lost, an act which he assured himself there could be no danger to him before his marriage. When that was consummated every dollar of it would be paid. He seemed to have suddenly aged with years, his arms fell at his side, his head dropped on his breast, and his lips were ashen in hue, as he said in a voice low and hoarse, with the echo of passionate despair. "I deny the charge of forgery. There was a note cashed for that amount a week ago upon the state bank of commerce, signed Potipher J. Gilphin. It is all right and legitimate, the money will be forthcoming in a few days. My father's estate is valued at over two millions, my sister and brother are traveling abroad, I expect their return soon, so when they arrive the estate will be settled I hope without litigation. To-morrow I am to be married to a rich heiress, a most accomplished and beautiful woman. To arrest me to-night and throw me into prison will ruin my whole future, make me an outcast

and a vagabond; cover my family's good name with ignominy, and an innocent woman with shame and humiliation. I am no villian, if you will give me until after to-morrow, I will make every dollar of the five thousand good." He spoke hurriedly, pleadingly, passionately.

"We will have to arrest you sir, it's our orders, here are the papers from the chief of the detective secret service bureau, also chief of police. We must take you, you can easily find bail to-night or in the morning."

"By whom was the warrant sworn out?"

"I think by the president and cashier of the bank."

"Have you any acquaintance with Potipher Gilphin?" asked the Count.

"I know the gentleman when I see him, but have no acquaintance with him. I do not think he had anything to do with your arrest."

"Come get on your things," said the second gentleman, who spoke now for the first time. "You can send for an attorney, when you get down, he can easily find some one to go on your bail."

"But the newspapers will get hold of it. For God's sake keep it out of the newspapers, until after to-morrow anyway. Make your card a good one, and keep it from the papers."

"No reporter will be given an inkling of it to-night, or to-morrow or the next day, we will guarantee that if you plank down the trumps."

They helped him on with his overcoat, which was a light one. The spring evening being cool; put on his



hat, and led him to the door and into the hall. One of the men took the key from the inside of his room door, locked it and dropped it into one of the pockets of his outer coat. They then went quietly down the stairs, and out of the ladies' entrance and into the street, where they slipped the steel hand-cuffs over his white wrists, whiter than any woman's. There was a carriage waiting at the curb, they helped him in, for he seemed to have lost all power over himself, and to be perfectly incapacitated to move a limb. The two men jumped in after him and they were driven to the city hall, where he was placed in a cell.

So the Count Henri de Gascon guilty of all the vices in the calendar of the fast set, of the men of the upper world, to which he belonged; yet was considered by his associates a man of honor, according to their standard of morals, and code of ethics. He asked that his attorney, Mr. Burroughs, be sent for immediately. When Mr. Burroughs arrived the Count related to him the whole particulars of the transaction with the bank. The attorney, a little sallow man, rested his cold, deep set gray eyes upon him, twisted his mouth very much to one side. "Bad business, bad business," he repeated, in a sort of whistle, drawing in his dry thin lips. "I could not believe until I entered this cell, that you, your father's son, Charles Leighton, could stoop to commit a felony."

"Don't, Burroughs, don't I beg of you, preach now, I can't stand it. But for God's sake help me out of this hole, do something, something to get me out of here before morning. Can't you fix things up, money

will do most anything. You know to-morrow morning I am to be married at eleven o'clock. See some of the officials in authority, I can be placed under bonds until after the ceremony; I am perfectly willing to return here to prison after the wedding, until the regular bond can be arranged. Do something to save Miss Graham from this scandal and disgrace. Then no one need ever know."

He paced up and down the floor of his cell in short quick strides breathing hard and blowing like a race horse after a two mile heat. His face at times red, as red as a feather from a red bird's breast, then again deadly pale. As he strode up and down, he pulled off his overcoat and threw it on a wooden bench which was meant for a chair; then his dress coat, flinging it on top of his overcoat. He tugged at his cravat and let it drop on the floor, opened his shirt collar, and so on in his nervousness.

"My dear young man, you made the remark just now that money can do most anything,—well not everything, there are some things it won't undo. One thing too much of it, is about as bad, and worse than too little of it. And too much of it has been your curse. It is a fortunate thing that your arrest happened before the minister had made yourself and Miss Graham man and wife. Why my dear sir, you run a chance of being sent to the penitentiary for twenty years, if the bank and the man whose name you signed to the check chooses to prosecute you. We Americans don't mind sharp tricks and we are decidedly loose in many things, but we can't nor don't



tolerate forgery. 'Try and quiet yourself,' he said, rising, "and I will go and see what can be done."

"Order me a box of the best Havanas, Burroughs, a hot pot of coffee, a chop and some fried potatoes and a bottle of the best French Au de Vie, from the hotel L's restaurant."

So on this your wedding eve, Count Henri de Gascon, Charles Leighton, son of an American millionaire, the quasi clerk, and soi-distant nobleman is housed in a felon's cell. All night long he paced the floor like a caged animal, while the poor old man of law went in and out, here and there, seeking for bail for his unfortunate client. He spoke with all the prominent officials and other men who might help; sending messages back and forth to the chief of police, mayor of the city, also the president of the bank, and the judge of the court, where the case would have to come up for trial. But nothing could be done that night, it was with the Count as it was with the old negro who was carrying the coffin of his child on his shoulders alone through the streets to the grave-yard, when some one remonstrated with him for not having the child buried in the regular way, he answered, "Dis is my funeral an not you'as." So it was not their wedding to be, the morrow was not to be their marriage day; and they attached but little importance to the prisoner's plea, to be released for twelve hours. We have become so used to scandal of this sort, that our fine edges have become somewhat blunted, and we have grown to regard them as an every-day occur-

rence. (An old warrior once said, that "he had been through so many battlefields, that he came to regard dead men pretty much as he did dead grouse after a day's shooting." It is said we can even grow used to murder.

The long night wore away and the morning came, and still there was nothing accomplished. Then there was one more appeal made to the president of the bank, double the sum of that cashed was offered to be paid to the bank if the president would sign the prisoner's release for six hours. But the president said, "Charles Leighton's bond would have to be fixed by law. He could do nothing until the case came up in the court. So the hour for the wedding drew near, the Count hoped to the last, sending a note to his bride to be, about nine o'clock that he would be on time. Mr. Burroughs advised him to take things philosophically while he went on his painful errand to the Weston Villa. After his attorney left him the Count looked at his watch again, it wanted but a quarter to eleven. He stopped pacing the floor, his face was white as death, his hair disheveled, his eyes blood shot and sunken, his handsome physique stooped and shrunken after his long night's vigil. He held the watch in his hand until the hour finger reached eleven. He gasped and moaned out, "It's all up with me, Effie will scorn me when she hears, spurn me as she would a rat. I know her, she considered it a square deal, she was giving me money, youth, and beauty, for what she considered family,



position and rank. Annette Lefarge you are avenged." He throw himself on the old wooden bench. He had walked without ceasing fourteen hours.

### CHAPTER III.

THIS COSTLY WHITE RAIMENT WAS NOTHING NOW BUT  
USELESS RAGS.

THE morning in every sense was propitious of wedding bells. The earth was young and fair again, goldened with bright sunshine, and glad and joyous with the song of robin and blue-bird. Soft skies of azure, soft breezes blowing and carrying delicious perfumes in every waft. The Weston Villa, stood grand and stately, in the midst of its trees, and wide avenues of pines and dark firs. The hour hand of the little Swiss clock on the mantel-piece, in Effie's boudoir, had reached ten. Miss Graham stood before her mirror, where Mrs. Norris and her maid Emma, were putting the finishing touches to her toilet. As was said, she had received a note from the Count about nine, begging her not to feel uneasy, or the least alarmed; that he would be sure to be with her at ten at the furthest; and to be ready so the ceremony might proceed without delay. And what may seem strange conduct to you now on my part, I will fully explain when you are my dear wife.

When Mrs. Norris and Emma put the last pin in the wreath of orange blossoms, Effie stood a moment gazing in the mirror, which reflects her superb beauty,



regal in the white splendor of her bridal robes ; in the web-like veil of rare and costly lace, that falls over her bare shoulders, and down until like snow rifts it rests among the folds of the long satin train. In the ropes of pearls, which clasp her ivory throat and twine in the lustrous braids of hair. Pearls wind about her arms and make a girdle for her waist. She is very pale, all brides are pale.

She had not slept well the night before, just before dawn she fell into a slight slumber, and her wakefulness left dark penciled lines under her eyes. She turned from the mirror and threw herself into an easy chair, the one she had sat in the evening before. In a few minutes her bridesmaids, six in number, began to troop into the room and surround her, they looked as they stood a second grouped about her chair like a bouquet of roses composing all their different hues. They were lovely girls, fresh as the spring morning and typical of the late April day. They had been selected from the best families of their set, and ranged in years from eighteen to twenty-two, Nannie McClure being one of them. Then Raymond Clinton, the Count's best man to be, who had seen him last about half after seven the evening before and parted with him on the corner of the Ave. E where he took the electric car for the suburbs. Then young Herendon, with Freddy Faboul, make their appearance. Freddy takes the girls by storm, and they all set up a titter as they gaze on him admiringly, for certainly Beau Brummel himself could never have excelled him in the taste, expensiveness and novelty of

his get-up, as Mrs. Calwald would say. His dress was of black silk velvet, his pants, a swallow-tail coat of the same, lined with black satin, a white satin vest richly embroidered, white full bosom shirt of soft India silk, and white flowing neck scarf. And for boutonniere, a mass of white roses. He carried in his hand a large bouquet of white roses, which he presented to the bride to be.

The carriages begin to arrive, Mrs. Norris leaves her niece to go down to the drawing-room to receive the guests, and meets the Rev. Jerome Arlington of St. John's Episcopal church. The hands of the little Swiss clock on the mantel-piece, have reached the half hour, and still the Count delays his coming. What a wonderful fascination this little Swiss clock has for Effie, her eyes never leave it. The merry chit chat, of her bridesmaids, and she herself, seemingly the merriest of them all; but they fail to interest her, fail to distract her glance, to roam one second from its face. The murmur of voices, the gurgle of laughter mingled with the strains of music, the scent of roses, and perfume of rare exotics float up from below and reach her ears and all her senses. But they only seem to mock her. A great fear is upon her, it has taken hold of her heart, and clutches it with pain as the seconds and minutes go by. She wants to scream out for relief, but she apparently is the gayest of the group. And Raymond Clinton wishes the ceremony over, so that he can have the first kiss.

The carriages still keep rolling up to the door and empty their burdens. Ah, her quick ear detects a



louder murmur among the guests. She rises from her chair, crosses the floor, and goes into the hall; her bridesmaids' glances follow her with admiration as she glides past them in the silvery shimmer and sheen of her cloud-like radiance. She returns again, and her eyes scan the Swiss clock, the hour-hand has touched eleven. Yet in the voices and laughter, the pitter patter, and tread of many feet; the rustle and swish of silks, satins and laces; the waft and whir-rr-r of fans; she hears Johnson's quick step on the stairs, she bounds to the door, and out again into the hall, where her butler stands before her, and holds out a silver salver with a card upon it. She picks it up, reads the name; it is strange to her, "Show him up to Mrs. Norris' room." She flies to her aunt's apartments, and in a second, is confronted by an elderly legal-looking gentleman.

She closes the door, paying no heed to the courteous bow of the gentleman. After an interview of about five minutes she rings for her maid; her maid responds to her summons, "Send Mrs. Norris up here without delay." Mrs. Norris is as quick to answer as her maid. Then the Rev. Jerome Arlington is sent for; the legal gentleman states to them that the Count Henri de Gascon had been suddenly taken ill at his hotel last night, and hoping to recover sufficiently to have the wedding take place at the time appointed, he delayed to the last moment, when his physician informed him he could not leave his bed, except at the great risk of his life. This as we know was a big whopper, but extreme cases have to be met by extreme

measures. "The wedding ceremony having to be postponed, would the Rev. Jerome Arlington please announce this unlooked for sad calamity to the guests." The minister moved with compassion for the poor girl. He rested his eyes for a moment on Miss Graham, then took a step or two nearer her, but she made no sign of response, she stood like one turned to stone, her features set, her eyes gazing straight at the wall. The Rev. Jerome Arlington, having all the delicacy of a gentleman, combined with the elements of a man of God, which possession gives exquisite finesse to character, said nothing. Feeling that silence was the best way of expressing his great pity for the stricken woman. This woman who in all her life had never known what it was to feel pity for any human thing.

He left the room to perform instead of the happy marriage ceremony the unhappy, wretched words, which announced the putting off of a long-looked-for and brilliant event. Fortunately the bridesmaids had all assembled in the large drawing-room, where the wedding was to take place. They were all laughing and chatting with the groom's men, which composed Raymond Clinton, young Herondon and Freddy Faboul, who was quite amusing at times, saying some good things in his lazy way.

When the Rev. Jerome Arlington announced to the guests in a voice tremulous with emotion, that on account of the sudden illness of the groom, the Count Henri de Gascon, the marriage would have to be delayed until his recovery. They were struck dumb;



as only an assemblage of people can be struck to silence on hearing of the unexpected. Although it happens every day and hour, yet they are dazed when the opposite of what they come to hear and see transpires. The guests scarcely seemed to breathe, as they gazed into each others' pale faces. It was what lay back of the words they heard. For the mind leaps away beyond the shock, which leaves the body transfixed, and the face blank as a mask. To find a solution to the something deeper, hidden behind the surface of mere cause and effect.

Scarcely a quarter of an hour had elapsed before the Weston Villa was cleared of all its guests but one, and he remained in the room with Miss Graham and Mrs. Norris. Effie remained standing, she had not spoken a word since the Rev. Jerome Arlington left on his painful errand. Then being aroused by the silence of the house, she turned to Mr. Burroughs with a cry, "Speak now, and be quick. I can bear this no longer; be frank with me, tell me the truth, and nothing but the truth. I will have nothing else. The Count Henri de Gascon is not ill, I had a note from him this morning, saying he would be here before ten o'clock; he did not say a word about being ill." Her face was deadly white, her eyes sunk back under the long lashes, which seemed to dip in their hot burning lava of dry tears for moisture, but were scorched instead.

"I am the attorney of the Count in the suit brought by him to set aside his father's will, he claiming an equal division of the estate between himself, brother,

and sister. I am an old acquaintance of the Leighton family. I was summoned at a late hour last night to procure bonds—ahem—my dear Miss Graham,” he said, taking a step or two towards her, for he thought she was going to faint, but she waved him away and cried, “Go on.” “Well, I could not go upon his bond, nor could I find any one else, he has first to appear in court and have his bond fixed by law. I tried every way to have him released long enough to come to you and have the ceremony take place, but this I could not manage time enough to make it of any avail. He will be sure to be liberated in a few days ; it was a mistake to arrest and imprison him—”

“Prison—prison—” she screamed, “the Count Henri de Gascon in prison.” And all that was selfish, vain, heartless, and ambitious in her rose to the surface and were stamped in the deep drawn lines about nose and mouth. “The Count Henri de Gascon in prison,” she repeated, “on what charge?”

“My dear Miss Graham, calm yourself, and hear me out. It was a little mismanaged business transaction on the Count’s part, which has been the cause of all this sad affair. The sum necessary could have been obtained in a perfectly legitimate way.”

“A sum of money, you mean ; why, money !” she cried. “He could have all the money he wanted, thousands of dollars, if he had but told me he was in trouble. I would rather put my name to my whole fortune and let him have the use of it than have this shame, disgrace, and humiliation come upon me.” She buried her face in her hands.



“My dear Miss Graham, be calm, try and bear up and hear me out. It was a great mistake on the part of my client not to have laid the matter before me. I could have kept him out of the difficulty, but the act has been committed, and you must be brave, and bear up under it. Prove to the world that you can be true to a man in his downfall. When the fall was made through pride and love of you. You received a few days ago,” Mr. Burroughs hesitated a moment, “a beautiful bridal gift from the Count in the form of a necklace of rare and costly stones. The Count used the name of a prominent merchant on a check drawn for five thousand dollars upon the State Bank of Commerce, knowing he could pay it in a day or two and have the check returned to him. It is not exactly a legitimate business-like way, nor is it legal, but sometimes it is done by men who are honest enough, yet cannot lay their hands upon the sum of money required at once, but have plenty to back them. Nevertheless, it is a risky thing to do, my dear young woman, a risky thing, and it takes a bold man to do it, a bold man to defy the law. Unfortunately my client has placed himself in this position, and we must do the best we can to get him out of it.”

“Do you mean that he forged the name of this man for the paltry sum of five thousand dollars; when the sum of a hundred thousand was to be given him by my attorney from me as a bridal gift on our wedding day. Forged, forged,” she screamed, “this means the penitentiary. Another blow, the worst of all, added to the shame, disgrace, and grief, already

heaped upon me." She raised her gloved hands laden with shining gems, spread out her fingers, and waved them in the air, as if brushing something from before her eyes. She suffered, she had made others suffer, and now she drank gall and worm-wood, and there was no one by to pity.

During the last year the Count Henri de Gascon was the prop she rested her pride, vanity and ambition upon; the ladder by which she was to climb to her goal. Now his name, his proud old family name, which was to be the mantle in whose folds she would hide forever the taint upon her own was spotted and besmirched with crime. Whether intentional or not, he had committed a deed to confine him to a felon's cell. She seemed to shrink and shrivel within her white robes and grow stooped with the weight of years unlived. "Prison, prison," she gasped, "he does not deserve to be sent to prison, we must try and keep him from going if possible. Send for my attorney, he must be somewhere in the house; and for Mr. Mordaunt and Giles, my agents and trustees. Mr. Mordaunt was to give me away." She tottered to the door to go to her rooms, reached out her hand to open it, reeled, swayed to and fro, then fell down in a dead swoon.

Mrs. Norris sprang to her aid, so did Mr. Burroughs, they picked her up and laid her upon her aunt's bed and administered stimulants of the best brandy. In a little while she came to. "Leave me," she said, "I wish to be alone awhile." Mrs. Norris and Mr. Burroughs retired to a private room, where



they found her attorney and agents waiting to have an interview with her. No one spoke for a few moments, until Mrs. Norris said: "There was no use for them to wait longer," as it would be impossible for her niece to see any one for two or three days.

After the room was cleared and she was alone, Effie sat up in bed, then she arose and went to the mirror and stood before it, for she loved her beauty as women of her kind do. She started back, frightened at the face it showed. "Then this is what it means to suffer," she gasped. She had often wondered at the deep plough-shares made in faces still young, but instead of awakening a momentary feeling of sympathy, they more often elicited her contempt and scorn. She suffered; yes, she suffered; she was beaten, whipped, scourged, humiliated, struck to the earth, as it were. Her affiancé lay in a criminal's cell. She raised her arms up, wrenched from her head her veil with its crown of orange blossoms, and flung it on the floor; she tore the pearls from her throat, tore them from her arms and wrists; she ripped the long soft gloves from her hands and threw them on her veil. Her satin bodice, which took the finest sewing woman in one of the most fashionable establishments in the city six weeks to make; so rich was it in white jet and lace embroidery; then she tore off her skirt with its yards of costly lace, also her slippers, and threw them all in a heap; then went to the bell and rang for her maid. "Take them away, Emma," she cried, pointing to the white shimmering bundle, when her maid entered the room. "Fetch me a morn-



ing robe, something dark, nothing white, Emma. I hate white, Emma. Give me something black, Emma, black—black—.” She threw herself upon the bed again.

The French woman did as she was told, not knowing what to say to her young mistress, whom she had a genuine liking for, and was now really grieved for her in her trouble. She took from Mrs. Norris’ wardrobe a black India silk morning gown, which was the best she could do, and helped her into it, and tucked her in the bed and told her to try and rest. Then she went to the white pile, the heavy satin robe, covered in meshes of foamy lace, that cost what would be a fortune to many a poor family; her bridal veil, with its crown of orange blossoms; her white satin slippers, her lace handkerchief, her fan, which was a work of art; her bouquet, and her ropes of pearls with diamonds almost as big as filberts glistening here and there, and clasping the strings together; all lay in a heap. The poor French woman stood aghast, looking down upon them with a strange superstitious fear, dread, and awe of something like what we have about the clothes of the dead. The tears came to her eyes, for she felt sorry to the heart for the young lady’s disappointment and disgrace. She stooped down, picked them up, and placed them in a large closet set in the room, turned the key in the lock, took the key out, and dropped it in her pocket.

This costly white raiment was nothing now, but a useless heap of rags. So dear old Carlyle was in truth a great philosopher, when he wrote his “Sartor Re-



sartus," which proves that man or woman is not merely a thing of clothes. But a still greater philosopher, one greater than all, who said: "Is not the life more than the meat or raiment."

## CHAPTER IV.

WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE ON.

As Buchanan Reid sings, "The day so mild was heaven's own child," everywhere was manifest the gladness and brightness of the young spring. In opening bud and leaf, in skies of mellow blue flecked with soft sailing silvery grey clouds; such as the artist Corot wrote of to a friend, when he went on a visit to southern France: "Here the skies are so low, humid and tender, that they seem to draw me nearer to heaven." It was the evening of a day like this, all the country around Mrs. Lowell's home had donned its spring mantle of green gossamer, embroidered in lilacs, bridal-wreaths, snow-balls, and violets, which wafted their fragrance upon the breezes that soughed in gentle murmurs through the great sycamores, forest oaks, and maples. Above the heavens were radiant, a full moon hung in the cloudless arch of deep purplish blue; in the southeast Jupiter rose resplendent above the horizon like a luminous jewel. The moon flung long rifts of light among the maples and cedars, and studded the river with millions of sparkling gems, as it wound in and out like a silver serpent through the low lands, and its waves lipped and lapped musically against the flat shores.



In a large room on the opposite side of the hall with its windows looking east, and out upon a grove of trees lay Annette Lefarge dying. She had been about six weeks with Mrs. Lowell, and everything had been done to make her numbered days on earth happy. Cyrus Alvin visited her twice a week, spending two or three hours with her and taking tea with Mrs. Lowell. Annette told him much about her life in these days, that is going into details about herself and Charles Leighton, the man she eloped with, the man known abroad on the continent of Europe as the Count Henri de Gascon. When Annette found herself in the home of Gartha she knew that Mrs. Lowell was one and the same Miss Rowland, president of the Rowland Institute, where Louise had first taken her infant boy. She was sure she was under the same roof with her son, as Louise had told her when she went to the Institute the second time for the child, that the president had taken the boy to rear. At first it was thought best by Gartha and Cyrus Alvin not to have her see the child, as she was so far gone, thinking it would cause her so much unnecessary suffering, and that the little fellow was too young to understand any exhibition of grief. But the urgent pleading of Mrs. Leighton for one sight of her child before she died was granted merely to give her rest and piece of mind. It was agreed to by Annette that he was to know nothing of the existing relationship between them. Gartha promising her that when Charley was older and the time came when she thought it best to speak to him of his mother, she



would do so. Annette was alone when Gartha brought the boy into the sick room, Louse not being permitted to be present. She was sitting up in bed, supported by pillows; at sight of the child she shut her eyes, clasped her hands together, and seemed to wring them without having the power to move a muscle. Then she stretched out her arms to him. Gartha lifted him up upon the bed, where he was folded close to his mother's breast. Great silent tears fell from her eyes like rain and coursed down her sunken cheeks. She kissed him again and again, passionately kissed his forehead, his eyelids, his mouth, wept and kissed him again. The little fellow lay in her arms without a word, he felt safe so long as his mamma Garta was by. Then Gartha, fearing that the agitation might be fatal to the invalid, took the child from her, sat down and held him in her lap.

"Why do ooh cy?" he said, nestling close to Gartha, and looking at the strange woman, strange to him, with wondering and questioning face, whose expression was full of child pity for the woman who gave him birth, who by her own act, snapped asunder the right to her maternity, the right to say: "I am your mother." "Don't ooh cy, I loves ooh, I won't hurt ooh. I gives ooh my new box of blocks, I'll tell Tilta to fetch ooh them. And we'll build ooh a castle. Tilta she builds a bouful castle."

"Oh, my son, my baby boy, this is terrible, my heart will break, my sins rise up on all sides to confront me."

After this visit Annette shed no more tears, she



seemed reconciled and comforted, and never made another request to see her son. One afternoon Gartha sat alone with her, she told her how dearly she loved Charley. She spoke of her plans for his future, should she live to carry them out, and that she intended to legally adopt him as her son. "They that act the part of brother, sister, and mother, such is my brother, sister, and mother."

So on this night Annette Lafarge's hours were fast passing into the half hours, quarter hours, and minutes. Gartha had been summoned from the room, where she lay dying, she lay alone. A shaded lamp burned low on a table, which stood in a corner near one of the side windows, shedding a soft dim light and mingling with the moon beams that came through the panes, weaving long threads of spun silver upon the floor, and on the chairs and all other objects, and dropped a block or two of argent brightness by her bedside.

Annette was not asleep, but she was upon the edge of the shore of that borderland, where soul and body separate, where the soul reviews the past, and catches a glimpse of the world of spirit which it is about to enter. She was back again in the bijou flat in the apartment house on G street. She was young, strong, and beautiful, and little Elsie lay asleep in her crib. The past sixteen years was all a dream, a brilliant reckless dream; with its wild, mad passion turned to a hideous serpent, which she now had awakened from and felt the great and indescribable gladness which comes to one who has been on the brink of a

terrible death, and by some miraculous intervention has been snatched from the grave.

She felt the sense of safety and protection, such as the true pure woman and wife feels in a good man's love. Oh, yes, she was back again, safe in the dear sweet home with Potipher; dear, quiet, tender, loving Potipher, who worked all day at his desk to provide comforts and even luxuries for herself and baby Elsie. Potipher who worshipped her dark regal beauty, who was much older than his years. Strange, she never understood his true worth before she lived through this dreadful dream. She had looked upon him as small, insignificant looking, and ugly; his tender, quiet, silent ways, a rebuke to her frivolity, and the vain, ambitious thoughts, which constantly filled her mind. She had laughed and ridiculed his love for her, and the way he toiled for her and the baby born to them.

It was nearly the dinner hour, he would soon be home, she would go to him and throw herself upon her knees before him and beg and plead for his forgiveness. She would clasp his knees, kiss his hands and feet; she would tell him how dearly she loved him, and what a horrible dream she had, and how it had shown her his true worth. She never deserved his love, but she would try to in the future. Oh, yes, she would put her arms about his neck and draw his head upon her bosom; she would tell him how glad and over-joyed she was to feel that she was safe, and to hold her fast and save her from herself.

Then again she stood beside the crib of her baby



Elsie, her hand in Charles Leighton's; he handsome as a Greek Apollo, with his fair Saxon hair and features, his blue amorous eyes, looking into hers, as he poured in her ear words of wild, hot passion. Pleading with her to fly with him, as she lingered over her sleeping babe; he swearing to be true until death would part them. She felt again all the ardent, mad love rise in her bosom for the man, who by subtle insidious wiles deadened all the moral responsibilities of wife and mother.

The door of the room opens softly, and a dark figure enters, takes a few steps, and stands in the middle of the floor. A stray moonbeam falls upon the dying woman's face, showing it white as sculptured marble, with her dark hair streaming upon the pillow, and laying in waves upon the broad blue veined forehead. The black lashes shading the cheek, the patrician nose with its delicate nostril, and the vivacious lips soon to be sealed forever in death. The figure steps to the side of the bed, kneels down with a low moan, the dying woman stretches out her arms, and gropes about the coverlet, until her hands rest upon the dark bent head. "Oh, save me, Potipher; save me, dear," she moans, "save me from myself. Dear, I knew it was all a dream, a strange wild, hilarious, brilliant, reckless dream. Oh, I have awakened from such a bad dream, Potipher; I am so glad to know it was but a dream. It took sixteen years out of my life, and I am so glad to be back again in the cosy home safe with you and baby Elsie. Oh Potipher, forgive me that I ever thought of being

untrue to you. Oh, dear, I shall be so happy now in your love; oh, so happy to live for you and my baby, I love you, dear."

"Annette," said a voice, she knew yet silent to her for years, but now came whispering back, as she stood upon the shore of eternity, "Annette," and a hand clasped hers, and lifted it up from the coverlet and held it in his warm palms. "Annette, do you know me?" He calls her name again, she rallies and turns her head and opens her eyes.

"Who is it? Who called me? I know the voice, no one ever spoke my name like that but one; no one ever uttered it with such tender intonations, but Potipher Gilphin. And it cannot be his voice; oh, no, impossible, not now, unless, unless he comes to upbraid me for bringing upon the head of his child shame and disgrace. But Potipher Gilphin would not come now that I am dying; oh, no, no, it would not be like him." He bends over her and calls Annette again. "Who are you? Come close to me, lift me up so that I may see your face." He places his arm under her shoulders and raises her up; she passes her hand over his face down along the right arm until she touches the maimed wrist. "Oh, it's you, dear, oh, Potipher, Potipher, forgive me; ah, I dare not speak it; I dare not call you what you were once to me. But for the sake of the vows we pledged at the altar and broken so ruthlessly, by me; yes, madly, blindly, and yet ignorantly; oh, forgive me. For the sake of the few sweet years of our youth that we spent together and the baby Elsie born to us, forgive me. Lift me up,



dear, and hold me close in your arms, and say you will forgive."

"Annette, there was a time that had you come in my presence I would have killed you. There was a time and not so long ago, had I met the man who betrayed you I would have slain him on sight with as little compunction as I would a rat. The same power which brought you to this quiet, lovely home, this holy retreat, the power of God exemplified in the beautiful Christian character of the woman, who has surrounded your last hours with peace and love, brought me here to-night, also. Annette, for nearly eight years I waited and watched, thinking he would desert you and rather than let yourself go down, I thought you might repent and return to me. I did not forgive you or forget the wrong you did me; oh, no, no, there was no forgiveness in my heart for you, or could we ever be more than strangers to each other. But I would have given you the shelter of my home, settled income enough on you to keep you comfortable all your life. At the end of the eight years, seeing you did not return, my heart hardened against you; I felt I could never look upon your face again. I feel differently now. I find that men set up a standard and code of ethics, dictated by their passions; they are at variance with the teachings of Him, who claimed to be the light of the world. Annette, these are strange words for me to utter, strange to my own ears, and to all my past mode of thinking. Until a few months ago I was cynical, unbelieving, with little faith in anything but

what I saw with my naked eyes, and scarcely that for even sight is deceiving at times. Yes, I forgive you; from my soul, I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven."

"Tell me something, dear, of Elsie; has she grown much?" she said in low quick gasps.

"Elsie has grown to be a lovely girl, she has been a great comfort to me; I have lived almost for her, she has been the one incentive to all my undertakings and also to their achievement."

"She does not know of her mother's sin?"

"No; I have guarded it jealously; she has been led to believe you died in her infancy."

She passed her hand over his face, raised her arm, and drew his head down and wound it about his neck. "You will not object to kiss me, Potiphar; do not fear I am forgiven, I am clean and pure. I have been washed whiter than snow, washed in the blood of the lamb." He drew her closer to him, pressed his lips upon her brow and so she died.

He held her awhile in his arms, then laid her head back upon the pillow, smoothed the coverlet over her bed, and crossed her hands upon her bosom. Lines of grief and great suffering scarred her face, but not even death, the destroyer obliterated its beauty. He stood looking down upon her; he, too, had lived over the past years in the few short moments. When he first met her in her rich dark beauty, her soft southern speech, and her low rippling laugh that always seemed to mock him. The homage he paid her, the worship he gave her, then their marriage, and the few



short years of wedded life in the pretty apartments in G street and the little baby girl born to them. The bringing to his home his friend, the rich, handsome genial Charles Leighton, whom he loved and trusted. The friend, who turned fiend and devil, the betrayer of his confidence and peace, the destroyer of his wife.

And now after sixteen years she had returned to die in his arms. Now she lay dead before him. He fell upon his knees by the bedside and buried his head in the coverlet, his whole body convulsed with sobs and groans. When he rose there was no trace of tears in his eyes, he had shed none. He passed out of the room into the wide hall, turned to his right, and knocked lightly on the door of Gartha's sitting-room, which stood partially ajar; as he did a little boy came running out of an adjoining inner room. On observing the stranger, he stopped still, resting his slim straight figure on his left foot, while he touched the heel with the toe of his right. "Who is ooh?" he asked, after a pause of a moment, crossing his right arm over his breast, and clasping his left elbow, he scanned the gentleman's features. Potipher Gilphin, whose thoughts were still intent upon the dead, stood dazed, stupified, his lips an ashen in hue, at sight of the boy, at sight of himself in miniature, even to his very gestures; for the boy stood where the light of a large student lamp fell full upon his face. Potipher staggered back a few steps and groaned aloud, as he cried within himself. "Oh, nature ever strange, old as time, yet ever new, thou art, indeed, an avenger

Oh, Annette, in your sorrow and shame, you did carry my image in your breast, for how else could this boy, your son, be so marked with my lineaments?"

He bent down and picked up the boy in his arms. "Oh, my son, my son," he said, brushing back the hair from the child's forehead, and pressing the little fellow's cheek to his. And for the first time since a lad twelve years old, when he stood over his dead mother's coffin, Potipher's eyes were blinded by hot scalding tears. The likeness of the child to himself was the stroke that shattered to pieces the crust which had grown hard about his heart since his wife's flight. Men never weep when the heart is incased in adamant. "Oh, my son," and he thought of the boy's dead mother lying in the next room, "I am your father and guardian from this night hence." He crossed to the opposite side of the room and seated himself with the boy on his knee. When Gartha entered, he rose, bowed reverently, "It is all over, Annette has passed away." There was not a trace of moisture in his eyes.

"She knew you?"

"She knew my voice when I called her name; she died with her head resting on my shoulder. I thank you for leading me to this. If it were not for you I should have gone down to my grave with the rancor of a misanthrope in my breast, a mere money grubber, never knowing or learning its value in its true sense, or how to use it best to benefit others."

She looked up and smiled the sweet smile of a



woman, unconscious of sex in the meaning of the senses. "Yes," she replied, "those who have been awakened from the sleep of indifference to look to God learn that His way, and not our way, nor the world's way, gives rest and peace, and that there is no lasting happiness only in doing His will. Be seated," she said, for he had remained standing with the child in his arms. She rolled a chair up near to his and seated herself, then called to Talitha to go and tell Fanny, the boy's nurse, to come and take him, that it was long after his bedtime. After Fanny had taken the children, Gartha and Potipher sat for an hour or two talking of the dead Annette and her little son and of the arrangements for her funeral.

The second day following her death, at the restful golden hour of sunset, they laid Annette Lefarge to sleep in the cemetery surrounding the little Presbyterian church under the shade of the drooping willows in the pretty lot purchased by Potipher. Dr. Hopkins and Cyrus Alvin officiating at the funeral service. Birds carolled sweetly to their mates, soft breezes wafted perfumes, and nature was young and fair, and full of color, bloom and living life. And thus God speaks, there is no death, it is but throwing off the old covering for the new.

Long after the others had left the cemetery her old black servant was seen kneeling in a crouched position at the foot of her grave with her turbaned head buried in her hands. Her dear young mistis, her

dea Miss Annette, de baby she held in her own arms when she, too, was young and strong, was gone forever, she would never see her face again, until as she herself said, under her breath, "Until de resurrection monin, but she had de chile, de dea chile lef."



## CHAPTER V.

OH, FAIR LADY, I AM BUT A MERCHANT MAN.

THE daily newspapers were quite lenient in their treatment of the wretched denouement of the marriage which was to be, and was not. The case of the Count Henri de Gascon was given to the public, with a sentiment born of the ruling passion to which the daily press is no exception. He was likened to a hungry man, with food, food, all about him, and within his reach, but by some fatality had not the power to touch it. He had money, money, all around and about him, and back of him, but could not lay his hands upon it when he most needed it.

A week went by and the Count still lingered in prison. Miss Graham sent her attorney to the bank to offer to pay double the sum if they would release him and hush the matter up. His younger brother dispatched to his and his sister's attorney, and the trustees of their father's estate, to leave nothing undone that money could do to save his brother from going to prison. But the president and officers of the bank refused to listen; they would be governed entirely by Mr. Gilphin. Charles Leighton was a forger, he had acknowledged to using Potiphar Gilphin's name on a check for the sum of five thou-

sand dollars on the state bank of commerce, which sum was paid over to him. The president and board could not think of releasing him on bonds until further consideration. It would be a menace to business, to the public safety, to the morals of the community; and a bad example to young men, to treat crime and criminals in such a loose manner. It was true he was known to be the oldest son of Charles Leighton, deceased, one of the wealthiest merchants in the city. Who died leaving an estate worth two millions of dollars to his two youngest children, and cutting off the oldest son, Charles Leighton, Jr., with but a dollar. There must have been something of the scapegrace about him, or his father would not have disinherited him. So the president of the bank of commerce argued. Potipher Gilphin was not in town anyway, and there could be nothing done until he returned.

At the close of two weeks Potipher Gilphin was seen in his office and therefore besieged by an army of attorneys, which swarm like bees in a honey hive, wherever there is a money hive. But to all their offers and arguments he was silent and taciturn. He told them he had been away, he had been with death, and he had given the matter no thought, he had heard nothing of the particulars until a few days before his return to town; he would see the president of the bank and have a talk with him. That same afternoon he spent three hours with the president and board of officials, Mr. Gilphin himself being one of the largest stockholders.



The night before Potipher left for the city he had a long talk with Gartha about Charles Leighton. Both had read the full review given in the press of the event, and the wedding which was to be the great social affair of the season. Mr. Gilphin had informed Gartha that Charles Leighton was soon to marry a rich heiress, and that he was known to his fiancée and the society in which he moved as the Count Henri de Gascon. In the last few years Mrs. Lowell had heard now and then of Miss Graham, the heiress, and latterly of her beauty and social triumphs. She did not pay much attention to the doings of the gay upper social world, but when Potipher handed her the papers which contained the full account of the wedding to be, and was not, and the arrest for forgery of Charles Leighton, the Count Henri de Gascon, she put the papers aside until a more convenient time when she could read them through without being disturbed. Later in the day she was in her sitting-room alone, and thinking of the papers, she went to her desk, took them out and read them till the end. When she finished she put the papers back in her desk, went to her bed-room, closed the door and locked it and knelt down before the table with the black wooden crucifix, and prayed long and fervently. When she rose from her knees she was deathly pale, her cheeks wet with the tears that came hot and burning from her eyes, that dipped them up from the well of her heart.

That same evening she had her long talk with Potipher in the library. He was seated near the table, she reclined opposite him. A large silver

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student lamp stood in its center between them, throwing his face into shadow, while he had a full view of hers.

"Then you do not think that he has been led to this crime to receive the punishment he justly deserves?" he said after she had been pleading with him some time.

"Yes, he was led to commit the crime; crime naturally follows crime; he could not escape it."

"Yet you ask me not to prosecute him, and if it is in my power to save him from going to state's prison, to use it. The request is beyond me; it is not in human nature to comply with it. This man was the friend of my youth; I loved him; he was treacherous to that love and friendship; false to the trust reposed in him. He stole my wife, made desolate my home, blighted the years of my young manhood, and left my little daughter motherless, with shame resting on her innocent head. Then when passion is satiated, he throws her aside and left her to die in poverty, or go down lower and lower, until she found a bed in the slums. My time has come, Charles Leighton must pay the penalty of his dissolute life, and his crime. Heaven has ordained that Annette Lefarge be avenged. Years ago I spared him, but now fate or something higher has thrown him back in my hands, to deal with him accordingly."

"If Annette were here; if her spirit could speak, she would say forgive. She has been forgiven. You would not be happy to send Charles Leighton to prison, knowing he was serving a sentence in the



penitentiary, when you could prevent it. It would disturb your peace of mind, for the heart which has once been awakened by the teaching of the divine Master, and touched by His love, can find no rest in punishing an enemy. He gave you the grace to forgive Annette, He will give you the power to forgive Charles Leighton. This man, while he has no claim to the name of father, yet his blood runs in the child's veins. We both love the orphan boy; in the years to come he will repay you with a son's devoted love, when he learns the history of his parents, and that you saved his father from going to prison, for a crime committed against yourself and the state." As she spoke the color left her cheek, her eye-lids drooped, and tears glistened upon their long dark lashes, while the delicate nostril quivered with pain.

His glance rested a moment upon her face; what a wonderful face it was he thought. Sorrow had enobled it; intellect had chiseled its features, spirituality refined them, and stamped them with eternal life, and the Master hand touched them with the glow, warmth and color of health.

"You ask too much," he said hoarsely, shading his eyes with his hand, "I have not reached your heights; the mountain upon which you stand, I would fain climb, but it seems inaccessible to me."

She looked away from him a moment, then rose went into the hall and called Fanny. When Fanny answered she asked if Charley and Talitha had gone to bed. When Fanny told her they were sound asleep

she returned to the library, closed the door, came back and resumed her seat.

“Mr. Gilphin,” she said softly, “one of the most inexplicable things in life is the thread which weaves our destinies; we neither take it up or lay it down, but it goes on weaving. A higher hand than ours fills the shuttle, and turns the wheel. Charles Leighton came into your home in the first sweet wedded years and offered the poison cup of passion to your young wife; she drank and fled with him, leaving behind the blighted fruit of her act. Effie Graham, the woman he was to marry a few days ago, came into my home over four years since; she brought poison with her, and love withered and died.”

Potipher's hand dropped from his face, he turned quickly in his seat and his eyes, which shot out fiery sparks from under the dark lowering brows, sought hers, but she looked away and continued, “Listen to a short story, I shall be brief, giving you just the outlines.” She sketched her life from the time her mother died, after that the ideal home at Tanglewood with the Lawries, up to the evening Nelson Lawrie introduced the young artist, Arthur Lowell. “Had he been Apollo with his bow and arrow dropped from the clouds, I could not have been more pleased,” she said, “for he looked every inch a young Greek god. He seemed to be all that I, as a girl, had ever imagined. It was love at first sight.

“After we were married, my husband took me to a beautiful cottage near Tanglewood. In a month we



went to Europe, returning in the fall after a three-months' sojourn. Then we settled down in our lovely little home on the hill; but as the weeks and months went by, we were not happy; our dispositions were not compatible. Little by little, my Apollo showed a cold overbearing nature; he was tyrannical, mechanical and despotic. With his hand ever raised against me to crush my aims, aspirations, and all that was ideal, out of my life if it did not happen to come within his approbation. It seemed to me he tried to turn back the springs of my heart, so they might run dry; to crush it, wither it. He was an egotist of the first water, he loved only self, and that better than any other human thing. He was unrelenting to any one who would not worship at his shrine."

She related to him the story of the summer afternoon when her husband first brought Effie to their home, and all the happenings during the year of the girl's stay under her roof, up to the evening of the day she found the sketch of her face in Nelson Lawrie's sketch book, when she decided that either she or Effie must leave, and she did not choose to give up her home to any woman of Effie's stamp. She gave Potipher the full details of that awful night, of her seeing the girl in her husband's arms, her head laid upon his shoulder, and the cruel words that reached her ear, "I am master in my own house, you will stay as long as I see fit to have you." I had all my life lived in the realm of the ideal, it was my inheritance. I set my husband upon a high

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pedestal to worship; I thought him a man of honor, truth and possessing every noble attribute. My dream of home was beauty, where the angel of peace was ever to abide, and where prayer was offered as a daily incense upon the family altar. But those hateful words, coming from the man I loved, the man I called my husband, to the woman he had made an instrument of to humble me, to beat down my pride, which I used as a shield for self-respect. It dispelled all my dreams, my ideals; they fell shattered in the dust before the sound of his cruel speech. The blow they struck me was terrible. Shakespeare's Hermione, accused of unchastity by her husband, and condemned to death, could not have suffered more. I was crushed, beaten, thrown back upon what? My own helplessness. "Oh, God be pitiful to us, when the creature whom we love, and set upon a pedestal to worship, we find they are but common clay, a mere delft image, stuffed with rags." She arose, walked to the door that led into the hall, came back and stood before Potipher, who shuddered and shaded his face with his hand.

"Everything grew black before me," she began, her cheek white as the lace at her throat, and her large grey eyes, looking dark as sloes as they glowed and flashed with the painful memories of that awful night, and a love which was now but a vanished dream. "I tottered back to the house and to my room, groped about for a match until I found one, lighted a lamp, went to my ward-robe." She told him of the tearing up of all her clothes, which has been already related



in the second book. "Then I left my home forever, I wandered about for hours, not knowing where to go, or where I was. A dense darkness had fallen upon me, my brain seemed clouded; I was dazed, stunned, crazed. It is in moments like these, when struck by the hand we love, that the soul recoils, sickens, and sends forth a great wail which turns back unanswered, unless we have the grace to seek God. But I did not then have His grace, to seek a friend or God seemed mockery to me; I cared only to be alone. Like some poor hunted, wounded, dumb animal, I wished to hide myself and my grief away from prying eyes and human sympathy.

About daybreak I found myself at Tanglewood sitting upon the steps of the porch. All the dogs knew me, old Blucher, Peter Lawrie's mastiff, and a great pet of Nelson's, came and licked my hand, laid down at my feet and began to whine; his dog instinct knew I was in trouble. The next thing I knew, Mrs. Lawrie, my second mother, came and led me into the house. After a couple of months I began to look about me for something to do. Work is God's solace for the grief-stricken mind. The Maples here, my mother's cottage, the lease had just expired. The man wanted to renew it, but I had other plans, I wished to live in it myself. I sold three acres of the seven, took the money and remodeled my home, and brought Charley and Talitha from the Institute to rear as my own children. Arthur Lowell and I have had no divorce. He has never applied for one to my knowledge, nor have I. Now, Mr. Gilphin," she

touched his arm lightly, "will you forgive Charles Leighton, I have long ago forgiven Effie Graham." He rose from his chair, walked to the window, stood a moment, then came back. "Is not this exposé of Charles Leighton and his crime just retribution upon him and his bride to be? They have acted base and treacherous in all the relations of life."

"Yes, in a sense," she answered, seating herself and resting one elbow on the table and her head upon her hand. "Why should they not suffer? Why should the good always suffer, while the wicked go free? Are we not apt to make criminals by encouraging a mawkish sentiment of pardon and forgiveness for men and women of the Effie Graham and Charles Leighton sort? Every boy and girl should be taught the awfulness of crime and its consequences, and to commit crime they must pay the penalty."

"Yes, it should be the part of their education that should never be neglected. If we sin, we must expect to suffer. Do you suppose Effie Graham has not suffered, and will suffer? When the individual whose compound is made up of selfishness, heartlessness, vanity, pride and base ambition, receives a blow which fells it to the dust, its suffering is poignant, its humiliation unspeakable. It writhes like a worm under the shaft that crushes, and the shots that sting and wound to the core. But the road to happiness is in forgiveness, leaving them to be dealt with by a higher tribunal. I have never raised a finger to lay a straw in Effie Graham's way, yet she has met her punishment, so has Charles Leighton. He is in your



power, now is your opportunity to be merciful; now is the moment to rise to the occasion; pray for strength and it will be given you."

He stood a little distance from the table, the light from the silver student lamp fell upon her beautiful head, giving a mellow richness to her golden-brown hair, as she rested her cheek upon her palm. The lace of her black sleeve was turned away from the curved wrist, showing the slender tapering hand.

"You astonish me," he murmured, "I fear I can never climb to your heights; you will have to teach me and help me."

"Ask God to help you. Pray and He will give you strength," she replied, rising.

"Dear lady," he said, rising also, "my school has been the material world. I am but a trader in its wares, a merchantman in its commerce. I know nothing of the world you live in; let me be your pupil, let me sit at your feet while you teach me the way to the door of this haven, so that I, too, may enter in. Oh, fair and beautiful lady, I will then exclaim with Peter the Apostle, when he said, 'Master, Lord, it is good to be here.' " He bowed low, left the library, went into the hall, took his hat from the rack where he had hung it, not meaning to stay but a few moments when he first came in. She saw him to the door; the hour was late; he did not go to the hotel but a few blocks away, but took a midnight electric car for the city.

## CHAPTER VI.

HE BRUSHED HIS HAND ACROSS HIS BROW TO  
SHUT OUT THE VISION.

THE weeks had passed to three, since the fiasco of the wedding to be and was not, and still Charles Leighton lingered in prison. It is evening, the hour when the shops, factories, offices and the great mercantile houses of the city empty their human bee-hives of industry upon the streets. The crowds hurry to and fro, hither and thither, like so many human ghosts on their way to their abiding places; their ranks being constantly filled by other ghosts on the same errand. The spring twilight lingers long in the horizon, in the blue vistas of lanes and road sides, loth to let the shadows have their way. The streets running from the square, on which stands the big city hall and four courts, built for the imprisonment of human ghosts, or for what was once human in man or woman. Although built after the best models of the time, with wings and gables, turrets and towers, looming up in the violet gray mist of the dusk; here and there a man or woman may turn to look at the great pile, but with all its pretensions to fine architecture the eyes of the passerby instinctively look in the other direction. The hour advances, the electric



lamps flash out their light, dispelling the dim dreamy phantasies of the twilight, and the whole city is illuminated.

Four high swinging lamps center their cold white flame upon the great prison house, and into its iron-barred windows. In a cell in a long stone corridor of the third floor and near a small heavily iron-grated window, which receives the light from a window opposite in the corridor, is seated Charles Leighton, the quasi-clerk and soi-distant nobleman. He wore a long dressing gown made of some rich brocaded fabric, the color a dark red with trimmings of black velvet; his feet in slippers, his vest unbuttoned, his blonde hair tumbled, and in general dishabille. He sat with his arms folded over his chest, a lighted cigar between his fore-finger and thumb which he every little while raised to his lips, and puffed long stems of curling smoke from, then folded his arms again. Charles Leighton had kept the same position since the sun began to droop low in the west, and the day waned, and night let fall her curtain of mist. Once he rose to fetch his box of cigars and matches from a bench in the opposite corner of his cell, and laid them on the broad sill of the window and resumed his seat again.

His whole past came up before him and held him to his chair with a strange fascination, as scene after scene crowded one upon another. He thought he could abandon the old ways and habits, cast them aside as he would an old worn hat, but, like the hat, there were marks and stains left by long

usage which can not be effaced. And at the time when he was on the very eve of a new future, a future which meant home, wife, wealth and position, they were snatched from him, and he found himself in a felon's cell. Why did he commit the crime that sent him to prison? Ah, why? If men on the verge of doing some dark deed, would but stop to reason about it we would have no criminals. He did not consider his act a crime (few do), he never meant to commit a felony. He was a gentleman, his associates had all been gentlemen of the highest class, both in Europe and in his own country, and he was looked upon by them as a man of honor.

But he was so used to having things his own way, indeed the trend of his whole past was in making things subservient to his wishes and will. The gratifying of his appetites and desires; and when certain appetites and desires ceased to satisfy, and began to pall upon him, he began the hunt for others that were more pleasing and advantageous. Not to be able to present his affiancé with a costly wedding gift, when there was so much money back of him and in the future, was not to be brooked, when there were quicker methods of obtaining the sum desired, and not be found out until he could return the money to the bank. It was the ego in him, the vanity, and amorprop, which is strong in most men and women, and the desire to appear to others what they are not, which blinded him to commit the deed.

Outside upon the pavement foot-falls grow fainter and fainter and fewer; the clitter clatter, rumble and



noise of the great city rise and fall, soften and blend into a sort of harmony. The light from the grated window in the stone corridor falls upon his pale face, as he listens to every step. Who will come to deliver him from his hated pen? Who will give him his liberty? Why do they detain him so long a prisoner? Every little while he starts, unfolds his arms and turns from the grating and looks about his cell. There are corners where the dim light from the corridors do not penetrate, but leaves the shadows darker; the ghosts of the past crowd about him and will not be pushed aside. In the twenty years of his frittered youth he had been guilty of many follies; deeds which to-night paled his cheek as they rose from their grave, where he supposed he had buried them forever. They showed themselves now stripped of all sophistries that men like him clothe them in, naked, base, cruel.

What was that? He could have sworn it was the face of Annette Lefarge, so changed, so worn, so pitiful, sad and gentle. She never in life looked like that. What had become of the old colored woman, her maid? She never came back to see him as she promised. Could it be possible that she had told him lies, and that her mistress was really in the city waiting for the opportune moment in which to strike her blow. Well, if he had married, she could have been easily silenced by money, he told himself. But he could not believe she had followed him to America. Annette was no ordinary woman, and she would not for an hour brook poverty. The Count de Noailles

was madly in love with her, when she became convinced he had gone to his own country, never to return to her, she might have taken up her residence in one of the marquis' houses. What is that? He brushes his hand across his brow to shut out the vision. "Heavens, it is the face of Annette, so altered; her eyes never in life sought mine with such an expression, as if they were drawing the heart out of my breast. Oh, God be pitiful to me," he cried, rising, "I am a wretched man." He tottered up and down the floor of his cell for a few seconds, then went and seated himself again upon the bench and gazed out of the bars. Then he heard footsteps upon the stone-paved corridor; he saw the jailer coming with a small lantern. What was he going to do with the lantern? He rose up and began to pace again up and down his cell; he heard the lock click back in the wire door, but it seemed far away from him. He saw the door open and the jailer enter and lay the lantern down upon the flag stone of his cell. He turned round to speak a few words, wondering at him leaving his lantern in such a place; but instead of the jailer, there stood before him Potiphar Gilphin.

He brushed his hand across his forehead, tottered back a few steps and clutched at the iron bars for support; then gathering all his strength, he threw back his head, and with a pale haggard face, he flashed one glance of hate at the man, whose triumph to-night, he felt, was complete. The little lantern flickered out dim, dusky rays of pale yellow over the cage, making the two men look like spectres that had



crossed the long bridge of years to confront each other.

Potipher Gilphin stood with hat in hand, his right arm folded over his breast, his hand clasping the elbow of the maimed left arm, his black brows lowering until they met above the deep grey-blue eyes, which seemed changed to small glistening beams of lightning shooting out from beneath dark thunder clouds. His face was cold, hard and had that peculiar pallor which we see in a man or woman when passing through the great conflict of their lives, when they stand face to face with the object whose hand has thrust the dagger into their breast and left it there to bleed; over deceit, treachery, broken vows, a blighted home, a dishonored wife, and shame branding the brow of innocent children. All these memories crowded thick and fast through Potipher's mind, until it seemed but yesterday eve since he came home to his apartments and found Annette, his wife, flown, and little Elsie, his infant daughter, asleep in her crib. As he looked at the man who made dark the years of his prime, he forgot Gartha's teachings and all their influence of the last seven months, and, for a moment, he could have raised his arm and smote Charles Leighton to the flag-stones dead, if but to avenge Annette. But he beat back his emotion, as he again heard the words, "Pray and strength will be given you."

"Charles Leighton," he said, his voice low, quiet, but distinct, his slight well-knit frame seemingly to expand and take upon it added height, "this cell is a

strange place for you and I to meet for the first time after sixteen years. Charles Leighton, what have you done with these years? What have you done with the time since you stood with me behind the counter in your uncle's great commercial house of Dampsons & Co.'s? You, his handsome, elegant, nephew, son of Charles Leighton, the retired merchant millionaire. You played then at being clerk, and I was charged to drill you in all the intricacies of becoming a good shopman. I admired you then, Charles Leighton, for your beauty of face and manly bearing; I loved you for your genial frank ways, as I supposed; your friendliness, gracious manners, and what I took to be kindness of heart. Both were young then, but I was small, homely, insignificant looking and poor, with my way to make in the world. But, like Uriah, whom David the king had placed in front of the battle to be slain, I had instead of one little ewe lamb, I had two; a beautiful young wife and child. Charles Leighton, I brought you to my home,—well, we will let that go by, but there was a time, and for years, had you run across my path," he took a step or two nearer to him, "I would have found strength in this one arm to have wrung your neck with as little effort as a Newfoundland dog crunches the back bone of a cat; thrown your carcass into the gutter and kicked it after it fell, and the world of men would have applauded. But that, too, is passed; times change, situations change, and so do individuals, if they grow. But what have you done with the years which have gone since last you and I exchanged friendly greet-



ings? Have you flung away wealth, position and opportunities, which, had you used them, would have led to the highest eminence among your fellow men. But you bartered them for the cup of sensual pleasure that you quaffed to the very dregs. I am here to-night, Charles Leighton, to demand of you an account of a few of those years. Charles Leighton, what have you done with Annette Lefarge?"

Charles Leighton stood with head erect, his broad shoulders thrown back; he was deadly pale, and his eyes flashed out all the hate and rage which he cherished against the man who stood before him. The man whose friendship he had betrayed, whose home he had wrecked, whose wife he had stolen, and now, by some inconceivable web of fate, he was thrown in his power. Thus the saying of a great novelist is true, "That we hate most those we have most injured." Yes, the hate he felt to this man was now like drinking gall and wormwood, for he could send him to prison for the rest of his days, and to die in a felon's cell. He shivered at the thought. The Count Henri de Gascon, who all his life had been used to luxuries, soft cushions, low divans, pillows of down, and dawdling in ladies' boudoirs. "Annette Lefarge, umph," he said with a sneer, assuming some of his old insolence, "she threw me aside long ago, with as little regret, presumably, as she did yourself. She left me for a rich peer of France."

"Hold!" cried Potipher Gilphin, with the same gray pallor overspreading his face as when he first entered the cell, "you will not add falsehood and cowardice

to the rest of the crimes you have stained your soul with, to strike down the helpless woman with whom you spent nearly half your life. You left Annette Lefarge in Paris without so much as a sou to buy bread with; you promised to return to her in a few weeks; she waited for you in her handsome apartments, but the days and weeks went by into months and you did not return. She was in poor health, she got into debt and was forced to sell everything, even her clothing and jewels, to pay expenses and get money enough to make the journey to her own country and to reach her own city. Here she suffered from the most abject poverty, and if it had not been for her old negro maid, she would have died in an attic, in a miserable alley, of starvation. She was found there ill with consumption by an eminent Christian minister, who sent a lovely Christian woman to her rescue, and she brought her to her own home. Charles Leighton, Annette Lefarge died with her head resting on my shoulder, asking my forgiveness, and receiving it."

"Annette Lefarge dead!" he cried, running his hand through his hair, his eyes seemingly to leap from his head, as he clutched at the back of an old chair the jailor had given him to sit on. Then he flung it from him, picked it up and clutched at its back again, turned and looked at the iron bars of his cell; he felt he could wrench them apart with as little effort as it would take to break to pieces the old wooden chair he held to. He looked at the small round grated window; he could, with one blow, shatter it and jump to



the street and make his way to the Weston Villa. Annette was dead,—dead—dead—and he was free. He had nothing now to fear, once in the Weston Villa he would throw himself upon his knees to Effie, ask her pardon; he was sure she loved him some. She would fly with him; they could hide far, far away in the large cities of Europe; she was rich, she would pay double the sum to the bank if necessary, should his brother fail him. He knew his countrymen well, they would hardly take the trouble to molest him when the money was paid. Annette was dead, and he was free; the past, with her, was buried in the grave with her. He had feared her, feared that she would come upon him in moments most inopportune; in crossing a street, or turning a corner he might meet her face to face, and, in her just wrath, expose him or strike him to the earth dead. He had dreaded her with a dread that was terrible. She might make her appearance on his wedding day and make a scene before his bride and the social world that would have blasted all his prospects. She had been the nightmare of his sleep, the ghost which haunted his waking moments. And now she was dead and he was free, and Effie would never hear of his life with her. He turned his head and flashed a glance of burning hate at Potipher. He knew that with one blow of his strong arm he could fell him senseless to the stone floor, open the iron door and make his way to the street. Ah, but there were the guards in the corridors with pistols in hand; to attempt such a thing would be death. He steadied himself a moment, put

his hand to his brow, and brushed back the hair from his forehead, stepped forward a pace or two, turned over and clutched the back of the chair for support. He was a prisoner, all was lost, when he might have been free. Oh, what had tempted him; what had blinded him to commit forgery?? He had done such bold, daring, unscrupulous things all his fast life and had come out on top, that he feared nothing. He had found Potipher's signature on some old letters in Annette's possession; they were written her by Potipher a little while before their marriage, while Potipher was away on a short journey. They, by some chance, had got mixed up with his papers, and, hearing everywhere that Potipher Gilphin had grown rich and had money piled up in the bank, he used his name, but for a few days only, as he supposed. And now this hateful, miserable, ugly, insignificant, money-making, money-grubbing American had come to taunt him of his past and gratify his revenge. He had fallen into the power of the very man, above all others, he could least expect mercy from. Oh, a felon's cell was his doom. He shivered as his fastidious eye glanced hurriedly about his cage, with its walls black with soot and grime. Rats and mice coming and going, thick as troopers in a barracks. The dim yellow flame of the lantern flickering and throwing long, dark, gruesome shadows over the stone floor, and seemed to clasp hands with the darker shadows that lurked in its corners, as if they were the ghosts of the prisoners that came and went for years. His shoulders drooped, his body swayed to



and fro, his head fell forward on his breast, and he groaned aloud. After some moments he said:

“I thought Annette Lefarge was still in France. I left her in Paris, all my money was spent; my father died disinheriting me, cutting me off with but a dollar. When I left Paris I meant to return again, but the delay in the courts kept me here month after month. For some time before I left Paris, Annette and myself had become somewhat estranged, and we had many times in the last three or four years agreed to part. The Marquise de Noailles, a wealthy nobleman, was madly in love with her, and had been for several years. Being a woman of the world, beautiful and accomplished, possessing many gifts, I thought she would not allow herself to want for money when there were those ready to provide her with an establishment, and all the luxuries of her former mode of living. Besides, it would have been impossible for us ever again to renew our past connection.” He kept his eyes on the floor, and his voice, as he spoke, was low and husky.

Potipher Gilphin stood with fierce, lowering contracted brows, their blackness a contrast to the tallow pallor of his face, and the set, stern features. As the Count spoke there came a stifled cry of pain from his heart, as he looked upon the man before him, fallen so low that he would resort to petty falsehood to blast the woman he had ruined to exonerate himself. That, after living thirteen years with her, he would calmly desert her and in cold blood see her find shelter in another man’s illicit love. That there is

no standing still; that we must either go down or up; that we must either grow higher or degenerate, is the very philosophy of our being; the very law of life. Charles Leighton had gone on in his sinful career until all moral sensibilities became deadened, and the fine sense of honor which is the golden key to all that is best and highest in nature was in him drugged and opiated until it slept from the poisonous potion.

“Charles Leighton,” said Potipher, “I have not come here to preach a sermon upon your past, or to seek revenge for the wrong you did me. I did not at first intend to come personally, but to send my attorney to inform you of my intention and the course I wished to pursue in this matter between you and myself, but I changed my mind. The past is dead, we will bury it, it is best to put dead things out of sight. I have come to tell you that neither myself nor the Bank of Commerce officials will prosecute you. When you pay the sum of five thousand dollars to the bank I shall sign a paper for your attorney releasing you from prosecution so far as I myself and the officials of the bank are concerned. The state can use its own discretion in the matter. I cannot help you there. To-morrow the court will fix your bond, which your attorney will furnish, and when you pay the five thousand dollars you will be given your liberty.”

At these words from Potipher Gilphin's lips, the blood rushed to the prisoner's brain, for a moment blinding his vision; he staggered, reeled, and would



have fallen, but he caught the back of the old chair, sat down upon it, and buried his face in his hands. All the contempt, scorn and hate, which raged and surged in his breast against the man he had injured died away, and all his past sins came crowding upon him. He saw them now in all their hideous nakedness, their awfulness, they mocked him, they beat upon him and overpowered him. He tried to raise his head to speak to the man, the companion of his youth, the poor clerk in his uncle's great commercial house, whose beautiful wife he had stolen, but he could not—the sense of his sins weighed him down.

After a while he became more composed, rose up, looked about him, he was alone, the lantern was gone, so had Potipher Gilphin. He tottered to the door and tried to open it, but the lock was turned; he beat upon the iron bars; he tried to call out to him to come back; he would fall upon his knees before him and thank him and beg him for pardon. But he could not hear the sound of his own voice; he beat again and again, and tried to wrench the bars, and called to the jailor, but no one answered. He staggered back to the wooden bench and threw himself on his knees before it, bowed his head and covered his face with his hands.

Yes, to-morrow he would be free, but what of Effie Graham? How would she receive him; would she look upon him as tainted by the prison cell, by felony? Yes, it would brand him, so long as he lived. How had she taken the disgrace and humiliation he had brought upon her in the blaze of all the

wedding assemblage. Could he ever find courage to meet her face to face again? Would she forgive him? Would she marry him now with the stain of a forger upon his name? Oh, he feared not, she would spurn him from her; if she did, then what? Well, let what would come, on the morrow he would be a free man, and all else was merged in the sense of that promise of liberty. Oh, blessed freedom! Oh, blessed liberty! He would never, never go back to the old life of sin and slavery. To-morrow he would be given his liberty. He felt the state would hardly take the trouble to prosecute him. He groaned aloud. He did not pray; he had never bent his knee in prayer since a child when his mother taught him to lisp, "Now I lay me down to sleep." Men like Charles Leighton do not come by prayer all at once. Some writers tell us, since men have grown so wise, prayer has gone out of date. There can be no substitute for prayer any more than there can be for bread; prayer is the communion of the soul with God. Yet Charles Leighton blurted out something like thanks in his remorse and agony.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE WORLD OF FASHION PASSES ITS VERDICT ON HAPPENINGS PAST AND PRESENT.

A FEW weeks after the scenes in our last chapter, society came once more to Terrace Q., to wind up the season. Society did not go into mourning over the denouement of the great wedding which was to be and was not. It took it quite philosophically, something like a child disturbed in building a castle in the sand pile by its companion who is building another, it topples over, "Oh, I'm so sorry fo ooh," and immediately turns to its play and building in the sand pile. So with society. The drawing-rooms, library and music rooms were filled as usual, not one of Mrs. Barton Hamstead's set was missing, but Mrs. General Campden and the bride and groom-to-be and was not. Hot cups of tea, chocolate, and bouillon, cakes and ices were served. And I'm positive something a little stronger for those who cared to indulge, for I saw a large china punch bowl standing on the library table near the silver tea urn. Society was in great glee on this afternoon, it had so much to say, so much to talk about; it was simply full to overflowing. It was like the gushing young woman, who, on meeting her intimate friend whom she had been

separated from during a short vacation, "Oh, Fanny," she cried, "I have so much to tell you. I have a whole bag full of news, I began to feel if you didn't come soon so I could let out, I should bust." Society was in some such plight when it gathered its votaries at Terrace Q. on this lovely May day. When it had been refreshed by several cups of tea, and other soothing beverages, which are warming and cheering to the heart of man and woman, too, its tongue began to wag.

"Well, really, of course, I knew something would happen. I felt it all the while in my bones," said Mrs. Calwald, who was present in all her ampleness of mauve silk, black lace and yellow buttercups. "Yes," she continued, dropping her chin and masking her face with seriousness as she addressed Mrs. Barton, "I had the whole story made up long ago and settled in my mind, but I gave the plot time to develop. I knew the affair with the other woman would come to the surface sooner or later; it was bound to, and I feared a scene on the wedding day. But, law sakes! I never dreamed of it winding up in the way it did. I had them married of course, and good and married, too; I never felt so badly in all my life as when the minister announced the wedding off, or, in more elegant language, deferred on account of illness. Pshaw, he knew there was no illness in the case. For all I was struck speechless, I looked at Almond; well, his face was the color of molasses candy after a good pulling, and as shrunken as a piece of dried sponge. All the rest of the day, whenever I attempted to



“speak to him, or to refer to the wedding, to say how sorry I felt for Miss Graham, his face would tie up in a knot, as it were, and he would turn away and begin flopping his coat lapels and pulling down his vest. When Al’s face takes on that kind of an expression, I know he’s at sea and in a terrible gale, too.”

“Yes, indeed,” acquiesced Mrs. Barton Hamstead, “I was horror stricken when Dr. Arlington called the attention of the guests and announced that Count Henri de Gascon was ill. I nearly fainted and so did Barton. The whole thing was shocking, an outrage upon society. And to think that our friend, the Count de Gascon, whom we considered one of the most elegant, polished and distinguished gentleman of our set, should be guilty of forgery. Yes, it was a sad affair, really shocking. I pity Miss Graham, she has my sympathy.” And Mrs. Barton Hamstead laid her blonde head against the back of the rich, upholstered chair in which she was reclining, and indolently swayed a white pearl and point applique fan to and fro. Her lean figure was swathed in a gown of golden gray satin, shimmering under clouds of yellow lace, which was relieved at the throat and bosom by bunches of pink hyacinths.

“My, dear,” said Mrs. McClure, “when men like the Count, who don’t live up to things, are beset by temptation, the devil gets into them and they have no power to resist him.”

“If I were Miss Graham,” said Nannie McClure, “I would hate diamonds all the rest of my life; I would

have that necklace of stones and setting ground to powder, thrown into the fire and burned."

"It was a fiasco of the most shocking kind," added Freddy Faboul, bending over his cane, a picture of blond freshness and dudishness in his light gray suit, cut in the latest mode, with low tan shoes. He was seated near a young fair girl who was one of the bridesmaids. "You know how a fellow may envy another fellow, and even hate him, when he sees him carry off the prize and get more than his share of the good things of this earth. But a fellow's wedding is a deucedly serious affair, and when a fellow's down, it's mean to kick him; cowardly business; besides there's the woman in the case. Beautiful woman, Miss Graham. A fellow, you know, if he's got any manhood, feels awfully sorry for the woman. I'm sorry for the Count, a most accomplished gentleman; can't understand a man of his acquirements running the risk of going to states prison. A lucky dog, after all, to get off so easily. He's a free man to-day, the state will never bother to prosecute him." And Freddie's genial face broke into smiles again, as he began chatting to the pretty girl at his side.

"Miss Graham has my sympathy, but I think the Count should pay the penalty of his crime," spoke up Raymond Clinton. "We know his past record in morals is not good, but that is not here or there, it cuts no figure in the case of a crime against the state. He has no more right to go free than any other criminal. The state has no right to draw the line between him and the poorest man inside her



borders. The forgery was intentional, he deliberately used another man's name for the purpose of getting said man's money. The state does its people an injustice when it lets such men go unpunished. If I were governor of the state I would order the Count's re-arrest, and the state to bring him to trial; then if the judge and jury cleared him, well and good."

"My dear Clinton, you're hard on the Count, what would be the use to punish the poor devil now," replied young Herendon. "Besides, we should allow for intentions, the Count had plenty of money on all sides, but couldn't lay his hands on a cent at the time he wanted it. I think it a bold and daring act. It took a man of courage to do it. If he had been given four or five days before it was discovered, the wedding would have gone on, and the five thousand dollars would have been paid, and the original check refunded and no one would ever have been the wiser."

"They say that some religious crank is back of the whole thing, and it is what made Mr. Gilphin play the forgiving act," said Mrs. Calwald, addressing young Herendon, "he has been going lately to hear that Dr. Alvin, and his strange doctrine of second blessings, or Christian perfection, or spiritual life, versus matter, or some such tomfoolery. Al wonders at a smart man like Mr. Gilphin allowing himself to be affected by any such nonsense. Then again some say that he did it because he feared a scandal, that the newspapers might get hold of his wife's escapade with the Count. He has a beautiful young daughter just

entering society, and it seems she has been led to believe her mother died in her infancy."

"Do you think Miss Graham will marry the Count?" asked Mrs. Barton Hamstead.

"Hardly," and Mrs. Calwald smiled significantly. "Miss Graham wants a husband whose record is clean from what we call crime. A husband in whom she can sink her own family and its past, and give her name and position."

"Oh, if I were Miss Graham I would certainly marry the Count," replied Nannie McClure, in a voice loud enough to be heard in the farthest corner of the room, her blue eyes snapping and her cheeks flushing red, "he did what he did for love of her, and now she must marry him and save and reinstate him in the world by becoming a good member of society, and living the past down. Oh, yes, I would certainly marry the Count."

"And Nannie McClure would, my dear," said Mrs. Calwald, lifting her chin and dropping her eye-lids, as she turned her face to the bright girl, "but Nannie McClure is not Effie Graham. Of course," she added, tapping the nail of her forefinger with the end of her shut fan, "I'm not infallible, but dear, I generally scent things. I have a wonderful nose. I think my instincts and intuitions must center in my nose, and not my brain. It seems to say the Count and Miss Graham will never marry."

The whole party laughed, as Mrs. Calwald ended her sentence with a little sniff of that organ, and smiled broadly upon them. So we will here take leave



of society. Society is not so bad, it has its weak side, its human side, its vanities and frivolities. For all society's cheeks can be pricked and made to blush, and bleed real red blood. Still it will not do to expect too much of it. The world has its work bees, and its drones and butterflies ; what we term society is the big butterfly without spreading wings ; it flies hither and thither, seeking pleasure and amusement. It perches on the bright flowers, in search of honey, and sticks its long beak down deep into the heart of their petals to extract all the sweetness to be had, for it is selfish to the core, and is only content when feeding on things.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THIS IS THE LOVE THOU GIVEST.

SUMMER has come and gone since we took leave of society, which at the first appearance of hot weather hied it away to the country and to cooler resorts. The month is October, but as yet newly born, Gartha Lowell's cottage stands in the midst of crimson leafage, pompeian reds, russet greens and browns. The sun has dipped its face for the last time below the horizon; the long shadows creep up among the maples that sigh in the soft breezes. The amber light of the western sky mingles with the silvery haze of the autumn evening and drops splotches of shimmer and sheen upon the goldened sward. It was Gartha's hour for meditation, the sweet sunset hour which she loved so well; the hour when her soul, unbound, unfettered by passions, desires, mercenary cares, and the toil which keeps most of humanity earth bound, earth grubbers, soared to realms broad, vast and high. An hour in which both body and soul ascends with the angels and tastes the exquisite joy of freedom untrammelled by sin. She seldom or ever was disturbed when once in her sanctum and the door locked.

Aunt Louise was in the grove, seated under the



wide-spreading branches of a tall maple, she looked quite a picture in her bright silk bandana handkerchief wound about her head, and showing beneath its folds glimpses of kinky gray hair that contrasted with her rich copper colored skin and the dark navy blue of her gingham dress. Talitha was seated upon the ground near by gathering up her dolls and putting them in their little carriages for the night; also her doll's cups and saucers from off the small tables, as she had given a doll's tea to several of their neighbors' children. Charley was very busy helping her to pack her dishes and other paraphernalia into different boxes. Louise sat upon a long bench with her head bent, her cheek resting on her hand intently watching the boy. Sometimes she would turn her face in the direction of the pretty cemetery where her dear Miss Annette was laid to sleep in the early spring. Then her eyes would have that inexpressible retrospective look we sometimes see in the large dark eyes of a Newfoundland dog, or a Spaniel that has lost a beloved master. Her grief had been deep and sore for the loss of the loved mistress she had nursed when a baby, waited and attended upon when a girl, and for years was her faithful maid, companion and friend. And now she turned to the boy, as the last remaining link that bound her to this world, and bestowed upon him the same loving care and devotion she had given to her Miss Annette. The old creature was now well housed and protected, and a feeling of deep gratitude to her Maker filled her heart, and gave her a sense of rest concerning the few years allotted to her, knowing

she would be well provided for. Fanny, Charley's nurse from the day he was first brought a baby to the institute, had gone to a distant village to take a rest. Her mother had died, and there was no one to look after her father and two brothers and the home. Every day Louise proved more and more valuable to Gartha, she took charge of the two children and their clothes, as she was very handy with the needle, and no one could excel her in darning stockings. She also helped Ann on baking days, she made delicious light bread, biscuits, light rolls, and no one, not even Mrs. Lowell, could make a loaf cake better. And the old colored woman's life grew fuller each day, and so will every life that turns to duty and the work its hands find to do.

Charley, at first, was somewhat shy of Louise, but he soon commenced to find his way to her when getting into trouble with Talitha, or one of those numerous accidents which are the lot of children befell him. Louise would then take him upon her knee and kiss his tears away, and press his cheek to hers. Sometimes when she would be seated by the window sewing and he got into a dispute with Talitha, he would run to her, place his two elbows upon her lap, rest his chin on his palms, look up into her face, and in his childish prattle relate his side of the story. She would caress his head and tell him he was "ole mammy's blessed boy, but dat he musn't spec to hab his own way in ebery ting, dat Talitha hab rights, too. An' laws, honey pet," she would add gravely, "if dars anyting bad on dis yere arth fo' a pusson it's to hab



da own way too much." One evening they were alone, having had the whole day to themselves, after Louise had undressed him for bed, she seated herself in the big rocking chair near the window and took him up on her lap, as it was her custom now to hold him in her arms awhile before laying him in his cot. Talitha had gone to spend a week at the home of the pastor of the little Presbyterian church, who had a boy and girl about her own age. Gartha went to the city in the morning and had not returned. Louise began humming one of those old negro melodies that are the sweetest, as well as the most characteristic songs of the old South. Every little while her eyes filled with tears as she droned out her words and looked out of the window. "Why do ooh cy?" he asked, waking up from a drowsiness, for he was enjoying a sort of sensuous repose, tired out after the long day's hard play, and raising his small slender hand, tanned yellow by the sun and air, he patted the bronze cheek of the old Negress, and felt it wet with tears.

"Ise donno, my son, I'se guess it's kase ole mammy loves ye honey. Kase Ise once knowed a bouful lady who was once a chile, an' she lay in dese ole arms jes like ye honey. Dey was not ole den, but young an' strong, so strong dat it 'pears Ise could lif' a house. But Ise knowed her. Den she growed up and hab a little boy dat she longed to hab wid her, but it 'peared like she was not to hab him."

"Why couldn't she have him with her?" he asked,

knitting his brows as if trying to fathom the reason why.

"Ise donno honey. Ise knows nuffin', Ise got to a place dat Ise can say Ise knows nuffin'. Ise used to tink dat Ise did, an' Ise make plans fo' dis an' fo' dat, but somethin' allays come to interfere, an' in dis case it's one ob dose puzzlin' tings, dat only de Lo'd can 'count fo. He did not sed fit to let her hab him, so he jes' povided anoder mother."

"Like my mamma Garta."

"Yes, honey, jes' like her."

"Did she love him like mamma Garta loves me?"

"Yes, honey, she loves him dealy," and Aunt Louise sat by the window holding the boy in her arms until he fell asleep.

Mr. Gilphin paid regular visits once a week to the Maples, on pretense of seeing the boy, but we know it was not alone to see Charley which took him every Thursday evening to Gartha's cottage. It is true, since the death of the boy's mother, the little fellow was seldom out of his thoughts. He intended to give him all the advantages in the way of an education that money could provide. A few weeks after the scene in the prison with Charles Leighton he went to his attorney and had a sum of money set aside for him, in case of his own death. Potipher told his daughter, Elsie, that during his stay in the country he had found a little boy who was distantly connected to him, and to whom he had taken a great liking, and he hoped she would like him also and look upon



him as her brother. He had Gartha send Louise with Charley and Talitha to Snowball Hill to spend a week. Elsie was delighted with Charley and charmed with Talitha, who made a lasting impression upon her, and to whom Elsie, in after years, gave all the affectionate care of an older sister, and this affection the beautiful Talitha equally returned in her unselfish, gentle, but absent-minded fashion. Mr. Gilphin then, after repeated requests from Gartha, sent Elsie to pay a two weeks' visit at the Maples. And to say that Elsie was pleased and delighted with Gartha, the Maples, the children; Tanglewood, where she spent a whole day with Mrs. Lawrie; Peter, Carl and his flute, and the pictures, books and dogs, would be tame language.

The evenings Potipher spent at the Maples with Gartha opened up a new world to him, a world of beauty, sweetness and love, as he listened to Gartha's conversation, so full of eloquence, poetry, and ideas new and startling to him. She taught him to see and hear, and that money making, like eating and drinking, should be treated as a thing apart in one's daily life, and she turned his thoughts into broader avenues, deeper channels and higher plans and projects for the future. Yes, Potipher had come to love this fair and noble woman, with a love stripped of all selfishness and passion in its baser sense. It was a love sincere, sacred and abiding; a love which sprang to life with his changed being, and which Gartha herself had created. Gartha, gifted in mind, pure in heart, chaste as the light of the planet Venus

when she shines in the east like a jewel resplendent set in the dawn's canopy of purple blue. Loved Potipher, in her own way with a love like unto the love of the saints. But Potipher, manlike, wished to make her his wife, to have her share his home and all he possessed. He felt free, since Annette's death, to offer her his hand and heart. She surely could have no scruples about accepting him. When he proposed marriage, she answered that she was not free to marry, that there had been no divorce granted or asked for by either herself or Arthur Lowell, although they had been separated over two years. "Why not continue on in our old friendship?" she said. "Why should you want to marry? Marriage is right if there are no obstacles to its consummation; it is a blessed state if it is the ideal marriage, a spiritual companionship of two souls that Christ came to establish." So she put him off from day to day and week to week, and month to month. He was devoted to her and meant to be until death, still he did not hold the same views in regard to divorces and marrying again that she did. One evening about a week before this chapter opens, Cyrus Alvin called. He came towards five in the evening, as he said, to get a glimpse of the country and a sniff of the soft scented autumn winds. He was looking worn and pale. He had had no vacation during the summer and had worked very hard; all the time he could spare from his church he spent in the different missions preaching, and lecturing in halls to working men and women. Wherever he went, to the home,



to the lecture halls, mission or church, and it was mentioned in the papers, there would be a crowd to hear him; the people were hungry for his words, for his interpretation of the Scriptures, the teachings of Christ.

It was after tea, they were seated in the library, his beautiful head rested against the back of the chair, and it seemed to Gartha that his pale chiseled features were becoming more spiritualized daily. As he turned his face to her and brushed back a few straggling locks of hair from his brow, he flashed a glance of approval to some remark of hers in regard to his breaking down if he did not take a few months' rest. Then he spoke of a sad occurrence; of two members of his church, a man and wife, who had applied in the open courts for a divorce.

"I am grieved exceedingly over the matter. It is a sad thing when two beings gifted with intelligence and having all the advantages of education and Christian teaching, and bound by family ties, that they cannot adjust matters so as to live amicably together; to bear and forbear. The civil laws are so loose in regard to divorces in most of our states that God's ministers are beginning to stand aghast at the fearful frequency of the breaking up of homes, and the separation of families, which is a menace to the morals of a community. Of course, many of the ministers are to blame; they marry divorced people in the church, when they have no scripture for it. If a party's first marriage is by a minister that ends it so far as the church is concerned. If the state

annuls a marriage, the state should marry all divorced persons. The pulpit, sooner or later, must come to the rescue. I will launch forth against it, even though I lose my church by it. Cowardice in God's servants is not to be tolerated, it is unpardonable. He hates a soldier of the dodging kind, and quickly court-martials him. God seldom picks out faint-hearted men to do his work. There is nowhere in the four gospels, where the Lord Jesus sanctions divorces, or marrying again when divorced. When the Pharisees asked him, 'If it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause, He answered and said unto them, 'Have you not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female,' and said, 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. What God has joined together let no man put asunder.' They said unto Him, 'Why did Moses then command to give a written divorcement and put her away?' He sayeth unto them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you whosoever putteth away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery, and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.' Matthew xix. chap. Yet with this scripture, spoken by Jesus Himself, the churches in our land stand dumb before the civil courts and their lax laws in regard to marriage.

"Paul speaks decidedly, in his epistle to the



Romans, in regard to divorce, he says, 'She that is married is under the law, if her husband dies she is free from the law, if she marries while her husband lives she is an adulteress.' He meant the man here as well as the woman. No," he said, rising, his cheeks flushed, his eyes flashing, as he began pacing up and down the floor, "there is but one marriage, and that has been idealized and spiritualized by the Saviour. 'And a man shall leave father and mother, home and friends and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall become one flesh.' This is binding while life lasts. If a man, by adultery, drunkenness or cruelty, or vice versa, makes life unbearable and drag each other into the mire, let them separate, the law of God admits of it, and the law of the land will grant it. But let them bear their cross bravely and heroically. No life need be void or wasted, there is always something for idle hands to do. The fields are ripe to garnering, go ye out to the market places and call the laborer in. The harvest is plentiful but the workmen are few."

While he spoke Gartha sat with bowed head, her elbow resting on the library table, and her hand shading her face. When he seated himself again, there was silence for some moments; then she lifted her head, and turned her face to him. She was very pale, and large tears glistened on her eye-lashes, which veiled the half closed-lids, and moistened her white cheek. He looked upon her and his heart smote him, a great pity and tenderness surged up in his breast for her, and crimsoned the blood clear to his

temples, for he loved her, with a love that Paul the Apostle, might have given to Lydia, in whose house he dwelt for a time, or Damaris; and knowing her life and its great sorrow, he felt grieved that he had spoken so emphatic upon a subject which was the cause of the long, dark night that clouded the years of her first youth. "Oh, forgive me, my dear sister, I have wounded you I know," he said, bending towards her. "These are delicate subjects, but the time has come in which the pulpit must speak and handle them freely and boldly, and, as the saying is, without gloves. But it is not to such as you I refer. Oh, no, God forbid."

"I agree with you in all you have said," replied Gartha, "I know what it cost me to break the sacred tie. But I had to do something to keep my reason, and my self respect; it was the tragedy in which I died to live."

It was late when he took his leave, for they had many things to talk over, as men and women do whose lives are full of self-imposed work, for the benefit of others. The night was soft and tender with fresh balmy breezes that carried in every waft the scent of ripe fruits, garnered grain, and dried wheat sheaves. As he walked down the road-way to the electric car station he felt more than heard the silent drip of falling leaves, and now and then the noiseless thud of pine cones, which were not lost upon his ear, but were part of the harmony to the sweet cool winds, that rustled the branches of the trees, and laved his brow and cheek. So were the brown fields, that laid



here and there, on both sides of the road, stocked with shucks of golden corn; and the cottages that lay embowered in tall maples, forest oaks, and the stately mansions of the city merchants and bankers. "Thou, oh, God," he exclaimed, taking off his hat, and gazing up to the blue heavens, for he had been thinking of Gartha, and with a gesture of his thin expressive hand, "Thou, oh, God didst reveal Thyself to us in the likeness of man, and showed Thy infinite love through Him, how blessed to walk with Thee, and live in Thee. Ah, yes, one must die daily to all desires."

That same night before retiring Gartha wrote in her diary:

' Oh, thou pale beautiful Christ,  
So fair to look upon with thy God's face,  
Benign tender eyes, deep and fathomless,  
Turned inward as if seeing earth, heaven,  
And worlds unimaginable.

Why demandest so much? Ah, I know,  
For the heart that loves thee, loves humanity,  
And as Mary Martha's sister, who sat at thy feet,  
Loved thee, this is the love thou givest,  
A love undreamed of, unknown, imperishable,  
The love only known to hearts,  
Wherein thou dwellest.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WATCHING AGAIN IN THE MARKET PLACE.

It is a May evening again in the Market Place. The spring twilight loiters long, the blue gray shadows stealthily creep, and creep, across the cluttered streets, and up and about the tall buildings that close it in and around. The soft winds faintly stir the young leaves of the few old stunted trees, that still stand here and there in the narrow alleys. Low in the west, bars of faint purples, opal-pinks, golden violets and bronzes, streak the horizon and illuminate the greenish blue of the sky. The people hurry, hurry, to and fro, hither and thither. The shadows grow longer, grayer, until absorbed into the dusky veil of night. Now all is hustle, bustle, in the Market Place, its booths are filled with all the plenti-ousness of the spring; all its rich, ripe fruits, its flowers, in all their varied colors and perfumes. The crowd grows more numerous (it is a different crowd from the one of the early twilight). It passes to and fro, hurrying, burrying, elbowing, pushing.

But there is a stranger waiting there to-night; at least he is a stranger to the Market Place. He stands in the recess of the same great window, where Annette Lefarge did five years before, when she watched



every evening for seven months for this same stranger to kill on sight. Charles Leighton, the soi-distant Count Henri de Gascon, waits to-night in the Market Place. Why does he stand there, watching this toiling, burden-bearing mass of humanity? Has he anything to sell, anything to offer these men and women? This mixture of every element, every passion, and some of its virtues, that stamp the faces of a heterogeneous crowd. Why does Charles Leighton stand there with a pale face, compressed lips, Potiphar Gilpin's pardon running in his ears, churning his heart, and stirring the soul in him, until it cries out against his ill spent life. The day he was liberated from prison he went immediately to the little suburban hotel, where his room had not been disturbed since he left it; the proprietors having orders to retain it for him. He was about to begin to make an elaborate toilet, to call at the Weston Villa, when a letter was handed him by one of the bell boys of the hotel. It was from Miss Graham; he knew her hand writing and his heart gave a great bound, tears rushed to his eyes, coursed down his cheeks, and glistened like dew-drops on his moustache. Yes, she remembered him, was his inward cry, and this was to congratulate him upon his release from the hateful pen, in which he had spent the last three weeks. Yes, she loved him a little he knew. He threw himself into a chair and hastily tore open the letter and read.

It was to the effect that all was at an end between them; that it would be useless for them to think of renewing the old ties, which he had cancelled by his

own act, and the shame and suffering that he had subjected her to. "And it would be better for both never to see each other again;" she wrote him thus to save him from what she knew could not but be a painful meeting, should they have an interview. The diamonds she would send to his bankers; he could dispose of them as he saw best.

When he came to the end, he was deadly pale; he rose from his seat, crumpled the letter in his hand, and began pacing up and down the floor. After walking some minutes he threw himself into the chair again, bent his head, buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud. It was just retribution. He sat far into the afternoon, holding the crumpled letter; then he rose, tore it into a hundred bits and flung it into an open grate, and touched a match to it. The bits flamed up and in a second there was only a few cinders, a symbol of what the fire of remorse and repentance had done for him. They were all that was left of his past.

So we find him on this fair spring evening standing in the Market Place, watching the surging, seething, toiling masses pass to and fro. What have you to offer them, Charles Leighton? What can you offer them? The labor you have so long cheated them of. You are free now to do and to work. You have many years of life before you, and plenty of time your own. Your brother and sister, agreeing that very day, rather than have their father's estate disturbed, to allow you income enough monthly to live comfortably, with some to spare. Yes, Charles Leighton,



you have plenty of time, you do not have to toil for bread, and on that last great market day you must render an account of this time. What shall you do? Go out to the highways, and byways, the streets of the great cities, and their great Market Places, and gather in the stray sheep. The small boys, the half-grown boys, the young men. Teach them industry, thrift, teach them the golden rule. The value of life, the sacredness of life, and that a man's life is a great thing; that it is a great thing to live and have our being. Teach them the new commandment left by the Man of Nazareth, to love one another, by this all men shall know that ye are My disciples. And that the words of the Master are as true to-day, and more so, as when He said, "The harvest is plentiful, the fields ripe to garnering, but the laborers are few."

## CHAPTER X.

### WHERE THERE IS NO MARRIAGE, NOR GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

WE will now turn our eyes to Snow-ball Hill in Elm Lane. It is radiant in all the blush and bloom of spring. The lilacs blend their perfume with the white redolence of the snow-balls and bridal-wreaths, and the great forest trees in all their young verdant leaf. The cedars and pines throw dark cool shadows upon the green sward and across the path, making interstices of golden light. The long day is drawing to a close, the hour is six. In the grove at the northwest side of the house is gathered a family lawn-party; they are seated around a long table, laden with good things. Potipher Gilphin is seated at the head, at his right is Gartha and his left Cyrus Alvin; next to Gartha Elsie Gilphin, and at her left is little Charley, and opposite him on Mr. Alvin's left is Talitha, with her bright golden curls falling over her shoulders and kissing her fair cheek, which had just the faintest tinge of the rose. Her face beams with loving smiles upon Charley, who is her vis-a-vis; he was pouting, being terribly jealous of Cyrus Alvin, for taking possession of his Talitha. Dr. Alvin made a great pet of the orphan girl, he said to Gartha one day, that her face



was his conception of what the angel faces might be that sang over the cradle of our Lord the night of His birth, and to the shepherds in the field; and to confirm his idea, she had such a delicious soprano voice. And if he hadn't so many calls on his purse he would take her to some noted artist and have her portrait painted. She should by all means have her portrait painted.

“Just as soon as my friend, Nelson Lawrie, gets settled in his studio at Forest Grove, I am going to have her and Charley painted. Nelson has not been home but a few months from Europe, and the judge is having the old mansion made over, as he wants his daughter, who was Mrs. Carst, and married Nelson Lawrie two years after her husband's death abroad, to live there. She is the only daughter of Judge Van Court and he will not listen to her leaving the old home while he lives,” and Gartha's cheeks were suffused with blushes, and her eyes shone with a light expressive of the affection she still felt for the lovely Carrie. “We were girls together,” she continued, “she spent much of her time with us at Tanglewood, the home of her second husband. You must call upon her when they are settled, I know Nelson Lawrie would be delighted to meet and entertain so distinguished a visitor as the Rev. Cyrus Alvin. And you love children; well, you will find two lovely children, Maimy and a boy nearly two years old, little Nelson Van Court Lawrie.”

At the foot of the table is seated Frank Conners, now a splendid specimen of young manhood. His

handsome ruddy face all aglow with health and intelligence; indeed, he is good to look upon, this fair, clean youth, with the love-light in his eyes. One can see in him all what a man might attain to, when master of themselves; free to fight the good fight, and keep steadily on to eminence. In such we may have hope, for did He not say, "That ye then might become as the sons of God." Elsie Gilphin may well be proud of the love and devotion he gives her; her wealth and beauty is but small compared with the pure mettle of this boy's heart, and well does Potipher Gilphin know this. For eight years he has watched him, and step by step, promoted him, and now he is his own confidential clerk, and with this has conferred upon him the highest honor he can pay to any young man, by giving him the hand of his daughter.

Mr. Gilphin went himself to Hetty Conners' Cottage on purpose to invite her to the family gathering at Snow-ball Hill. "Come in the morning," he said, "and spend the whole day with the party." She thanked him many times for his kindness to herself and son, but begged him to excuse her, "She could na leave her house alone, an' she wa' very busy then wie her garden. My son will represent me, an' it makes me such a happy woman to think he has the privilege. Ah, sir, you have been very good to me an' mine, I have na words to speak what my heart would like to say," and Hetty wiped a tear away which coursed down her cheek. Then glancing down at her hands she hurriedly tucked them under her apron.



“All I have done has simply been to reward merit,” answered Potipher, who had learned from Mrs. Lowell that it was in this, Hetty Conners’ cottage, that Annette Lefarge and her old Negro maid found a comfortable shelter, and that Hetty would not accept any rent from Cyrus Alvin; it was her mite to the Lord, she told him. But Hetty never knew the relationship which once existed between the strange woman, Mrs. Leighton, and the man who had been such a friend to her son. “Frank is an exceptional young man, and worthy of all the promotion I have bestowed upon him.”

“There is an old Scotch saying, sir, like master, like man, the gift to see and appreciate his qualities, and reward them accordingly, is in you. Frank is a bonnie boy, strong, honest and faithful, and he loves you sir. You will excuse me, sir, I ha’ many duties here in my little home, some other time I shall be glad to go.” As she stood before him, making excuses, with her white hair softening her round ruddy face and bright intelligent eyes, her clean gray gingham dress and long white apron, she was a picture of all that is healthy, wholesome, sturdy, industrious, good and motherly.

Cintha, the cook, had prepared a delightful repast, and Sam waited upon the table with all the ability, science, agility and grace inherent in the trained black servant. (They are born waiters.) There is one missing from Mr. Gilphin’s family, one whom Elsie mourned and grieved for as she would have for a loving mother; this was Martha Hays, who died the

December before of pneumonia. For weeks after her death Elsie refused to be comforted, she had never known a mother but Martha. Potipher mourned her also, with a grief sincere and deep, she had been an inmate of his house for over eighteen years, and he paid all the respect and attention, mingled with affection, he would that of an older sister. There is another old friend we must not forget, and that is Beppo, the dog; Elsie's faithful companion. He took up his position some four or five yards from the table when the company first seated themselves. He stretched himself full length on the grass, with his fore-paws in front of him and his snout laid between. Here he kept watch on the guests, and especially Sam, whose every movement he followed with his eyes. He was very old now for a dog, and followed his young mistress about with slow steps, but wherever she was to be seen Beppo was never far away.

The party laughed and chatted until the sun had sunk below the horizon. Potipher Gilphin was at his best; he had a uniqueness of character that stood out at all times, but which was more pleasing and delightful when in the society of others. His speech was delicate and refined, mixed with a quaint humor that animated his face, and sparkled in his deep blue eyes. In these moods he was really charming, interesting every one about him, and he had also the art of listening. Emerson says, "That he who listens well—talks well." So Potipher Gilphin listened to Cyrus Alvin, who seemed to throw himself into the enjoyment of the evening, and the prattle of those around the table;



Elsie and Frank, Charley and Talitha, the great trees, and all the beauty of the scene. When they finished they all arose, and later on Gartha separated from the others and wandered alone half way down the slope of the hill, which overlooked the fields undulating in the soft verdure of young clover. To her left the railway track cut towards the west, and also the brook, lined on both sides with tall poplars and willows, in their delicate green; their roots and branches washed by the stream, as it wound through the meadows and low-lands. She stood with her arms folded, her tall slender figure in its silvery gray robe, accentuated by a background of dark oaks, which were stirred by the gentle breeze to soft murmurs above her head. Now and then a bird twittered in response to the sougling of the leaves, tinged by the long rays of burnished gold, intermingled with a brilliant creamy light which streaked the horizon. She stood with her hands clasped before her, contemplating the scene (for as we know the hour had an indescribable charm for her). She was deep in thought when startled by hearing a foot-step upon the grass behind her, and in a moment Potipher Gilphin joined her.

"I was thinking," he said, folding his arms across his breast, "as I watched the children with Dr. Alvin, Elsie and Frank, that we might all spend a delightful summer abroad. I could, with your permission, send word by the agent here to New York, and have passages and berths engaged for the middle of June; it

is the pleasantest month of all the year to take a sea voyage."

The color faded from her cheek and lips, she bowed her head and was silent.

"Oh, fair lady, is it vain to sue once more for your hand? If I were gifted with the eloquence of a Demosthenes, the subtle philosophy of Socrates, I might then hope to plead my cause, and paint in glowing words the depth of the love I bear you. But I alas am but a plain man, and my love will have to find expression in the simple acts of hour by hour, and day by day. In that way I may prove to you how tender, steadfast and true my love for you is. I am aware there is a reluctance on your part to give up what you consider your liberty, and the work you have at heart, and which all unaided you have succeeded in so admirably, but, fair lady, in union there is strength.

"You would not only have your freedom, but my help in every good work you would wish to give your aid and counsel. This life," he continued, with an earnest pathos in his voice, "which you have imposed upon yourself, may after a while as the years go by, as you go on your lonely way, become irksome. It seems such a sacrifice, when it can be warmed by the companionship, love and devotion of a husband. Dear lady, I lay all at your feet, my name, home, wealth, and above all my heart. All I ask in return is to be my wife. One so fair and good cannot reject so much, when it means power to you, and happiness to both. You are beautiful, and still young, you are



alone; God does not require this renunciation." He stood with his shoulders thrown back, and as he spoke he seemed to have taken on added height. His cheek flushed, his eyes deepened and darkened with the intense love he bore her, and shone with its pure holy flame, which illumined his face, and made it handsome.

"There is nothing under the blue heavens so much to be prized as the single and undivided love of a good man for a woman," she said, her cheeks blanching white, as she spoke, and folded her hands upon her bosom. "It should never be lightly cast aside. To know there is one who bears me such pure and unselfish love will gladden the moments and hours of the days to come, and go down with me into the long years to the end. And whenever the thought comes that I was so fortunate to meet a man in whom I was capable of inspiring this sweet affection, this noble love, my heart will thrill and leap for joy. Oh, I thank you, and this moment; oh, believe me, is in the highest sense, the happiest I have ever known; though it brings with it much that is sad and painful. Dear Mr. Gilphin, I do not consider myself free to accept your hand, or to give mine in marriage."

"Not free!" he cried, his face turning deadly pale, and something like tears dimming his eyes, as he took a pace or two back from her. "Have you still scruples upon the matter of the divorce Arthur Lowell obtained in the courts three months ago, on the grounds of desertion. You have been separated nearly four years from the man whose cruelty and cold persecu-



tion drove you from your home. Three months ago he obtained an absolute divorce from you, and yesterday afternoon was married privately to Effie Graham, the very woman through whom he tortured you, by the meanest, basest and most cowardly instrument a man can use, the constant humiliation of a wife in presence of a mistress. No it cannot be," he said passionately, "in a nature so exalted as yours, there cannot be one spark of the old feeling left for Arthur Lowell."

Her beautiful head fell forward, her lips were white as her cheek, and large tears moistened the long dark lashes which shaded her eyes, as she pressed her hands upon her bosom. "Oh, believe me not one spark," she replied after a pause of some minutes, "the night I saw Effie Graham's head resting on his shoulder, under the old elm at the back of our cottage, and heard those fatal words spoken I told you of, they wrenched asunder every tie; they were the arrow that pierced my breast, and killed all feeling of love and respect. But we loved each other once, we were married at the altar, there we plighted our vows of love, and the minister of God sealed the covenant with the words, 'Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.' God admits of a separation, but not of divorce. He admits of divorces in extreme cases, but not of marrying again while both live. 'He that putteth away his wife except for fornication, committeth adultery, and he that marieth her which is put away, committeth adultery.' These are the words spoken by Christ in regard to



marriage; they are in some instances terrible and inexorable as death, but they were spoken to make sacred the law and tie of marriage, and to protect woman, the family and the state. They were not spoken so much to the individual as for the uplifting of humanity. To you and to myself, this law is our fate, our destiny, its duty lies before us, let us follow where He leads."

"Do you not recognize the right of the civil law of the state to annul marriage?" he asked trembling, as he gazed upon her in wonder.

"Only so far as it agrees with divine law, all law governing mankind should be founded on divine law. If I am a follower of Christ, and believe in the commands of Jesus in regard to marriage, I cannot believe in the right of the civil courts to annul it, only so far as it is in accordance with the New Testament. I have always contended for the spiritual union of man and woman; it is the beautiful union which our Lord meant for those who are high enough to reach it. It is the union of souls. Understanding this union as we do, let our companionship go on in the old way." She raised her head, the reflected radiance of the dying day fell upon her hair, changing it to a rich golden bronze, which enhanced the opal tints of her cheek, and the ivory whiteness of her throat, softened by frills of creamy lace.

Again he felt she had risen above and beyond him; what could he do but follow where she led, but he would make one more appeal. "The world, dear and fair teacher, laughs all such philosophy to scorn. It

is for your protection that I plead with you to be my wife. Our lives will be thrown much together on account of the children. I shall have to take the responsibility of their material welfare, you their comforts and education. Be my wife and there will be no impediment to the spiritual union, the ideal life you speak of."

"It is through self renunciation that we attain to the highest plane, the highest happiness. To do this we must turn our back on the world, and what the world thinks. The barriers which prevent our marriage is the commands of Christ, therefore it is my fate and yours. Look yonder," she said, pointing to the boy as he ran towards Cyrus Alvin, holding on to Beppo's collar and pulling the dog after him, at the same time calling to Talitha to follow on. Cyrus Alvin stood below in an opening space of field, behind him rose clumps of willows and tall poplars, which marked the course of the brook winding through the meadows. Through their interstices the gold and crimson of the sunset gleamed, their leaves catching all its varied tints. Above their tops, which ran like a dark thread outlining the horizon, was a streak of luminous opal sky that threw out his slender, straight figure against the deep brown shadows of the trees, and his head and beautiful profile silhouetted in the evening glow. He stood with a smile upon his face, his arms outstretched to the boy and dog.

"You love the boy," she said turning away her eyes. They had rested a moment upon Cyrus Alvin. "I love him and the orphan girl. Let the boy and her



be the bond between us, let us live so that if the barrier which separates us here on this earth, be not removed, we may meet up there," she raised her arm and pointed to the violet jeweled dome above her, "Up there where there is no marriage nor giving in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven."













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